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Fishing Tourism as an Opportunity for Sustainable Rural Development—The Case of Galicia, Spain

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Abstract: The functional diversification of coastal fishing communities has been a central objective of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) since the early stages of its implementation. A large part of the initiatives financed throughout Europe have been linked to the creation of synergies between the fishing sector and tourism. This paper analyses the opportunities for the development of fishing tourism at the regional level, considering the investments of European and regional funds on the development of fishing tourism in Galicia. Special attention is given to the incorporation of the territorial perspective and Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) for the sustainable development of fishing areas. The results show limitations of this form of tourism in terms of employment and income, especially those developed by fishermen, despite the significant support of the regional government for this activity. This situation allows a critical reflection on the opportunity to convert fishermen into tourist guides, based on the need to diversify the economy and income of fishing communities.

Keywords: fishing tourism; European fishing funds; Galicia (Spain); sustainable rural development

1. Introduction

Local development is a generalised paradigm in order to initiate processes of socioeconomic progress in peripheral areas, in an attempt to respond to productive restructuring and economic crises, as stated by [1–5]. The EU rural development programmes began to be drawn up in the last decade of the twentieth century with the aim of promoting a change from a model based on agricultural development to one oriented towards the diversification of the rural economy. Since 2007, rural development has been a fully developed policy, funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and created to respond to the socio-economic and environmental challenges of rural areas and their agricultural model. Since Agenda 2000, it has been called the “second pillar” of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), as an approach for sustainable development in rural areas, complementing the great reform of 1992. With the European Union LEADER initiative, the issue of rural development was included within the European Regional Policy framework to promote the application of the new structural and territorial measures of the CAP [6,7].

Diversification, innovation and cooperation were the general objectives of LEADER between 1991 and 2006 [8], and were added to the new national and regional programmes, PRODER in Spain and AGADER in Galicia, inspired by its approach and methodology [9–11]. In order to include local actors in the design of sustainable, multisectoral and inclusive development strategies, all these rural programmes were based on a bottom-up approach, in which the tourism sector was considered a fundamental aspect for the economic diversification of the territories. In this way, LEADER—and also PRODER and AGADER—allocated a large part of their funds to projects related to tourism development in rural areas [12–18].

The objectives of local development and economic diversification, as part of the European rural development, were transferred from the early years of the twenty first century to the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) [19], based on lessons learned from the LEADER experience. Additionally, the territorial objectives were included in the sectoral policy, and the Community-led Local Development (CLLD) was adopted, an approach that took the communities into account in the design and management of strategic development plans [20]. In this way, a decentralised management of European funds was adopted in coastal areas dependent on fishing. This has been the case of Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) financed with funds specifically allocated for the sustainable development of fishing areas from the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) (2007–2013) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) (2014–2020) [21–25].

Considering sustainable tourism as a factor of local development, and creator of synergies with the rest of the economic sectors, has allowed its inclusion in the EFF and EMFF as an element favouring economic diversification in fishing areas, generating new sources of income for the fishermen and their families. In this way, the Fisheries Areas Network (FARNET)—a network supported by the European Commission to implement CLLD—has designed a guide, “Fisheries and Tourism: Creating benefits for the community”, to promote the dissemination of fishing tourism activities in European fishing areas, with the aim of developing a more sustainable tourism that values the local community and contributes to its growth [26,27].

The proliferation of fishing tourism activities in Galicia is closely linked to the subsidies from the European Fisheries Fund, aimed at the economic diversification of coastal communities, and to the regional policy itself, which incorporates marine tourism and fishing tourism into the regional fisheries law, as an activity aimed at the enhancement and dissemination of marine cultural heritage (Law 11/2008 on fisheries in Galicia). In this context, the present study focuses on marine and fishing tourism in Galicia, Spain, and the difficulties in becoming a central element in the economic diversification in coastal areas. To reach this objective, four research questions are formulated: (1) what have been the investments in fishing tourism; (2) what importance has been given to fishing tourism in the development strategies of fishing areas; (3) what role has fishing tourism played in the economic diversification of coastal areas so far; (4) what is the interest of this tourism modality for the small-scale fishing sector itself. From a theoretical point of view, this contribution aims to advance the analysis of the contribution of European funds to sustainable development in fishing areas. A critical perspective is adopted since the authors consider an overvaluation of fishing tourism as a dynamizing factor for the economies in areas dependent on fishing in Galicia.

The focus of this study was on Galicia, a region situated in the NW of Spain, and one of the European regions with the greatest socio-economic dependence on fishing and aquaculture [28,29]. As of 2020, Galicia has a population of 2,700,269 inhabitants, that is concentrated on the Atlantic coast, the most demographically and economically dynamic area of the region. The regional government has had broad powers since the 1980s, transferred by the Spanish state, as a result of the development of the State of Autonomies. Among the exclusive powers that Galicia has are the organisation and management of fishing and tourism, which has had important implications in the development of fishing tourism, since Galicia has its own fishing and tourism laws, and the government has the capacity to apply for and manage European funds. These funds have facilitated the early creation of FLAGs in Galicia, and the development of numerous activities related to fishing tourism. Finally, the aim of this investigation is present a critical discussion of Galician experiences in marine and fishing tourism, and highlight the need to get a coordinated regional strategy, defined on the basis of a bottom-up process, where the participation of the fisheries sector is guaranteed.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Fishing Sector and Tourism

The strong link between small-scale fishing and tourism has become a global trend mainly caused by the decrease in income generated by fishing, and the search for economic diversification alternatives by the fishermen, who resort to fishing tourism activities [30–32]. Thus, the relationships between small-scale fishing and tourist activities as a source of complementary income for the populations of coastal communities have been increasingly frequent. Multiple synergies have been identified between professional fishing, recreational fishing and tourism, providing mutual benefits, and demonstrating their complementary nature in the management policies of coastal resources [33]. Although there is plentiful literature on sport fishing and its role as a stimulus for the economy and regional development in Europe, Spain and Galicia [34,35] are good examples, as well as in other territorial areas [36], there are few studies on fishing tourism, a relatively recent tourism modality that integrates a great variety of activities—some of them poorly regulated—and for which there are hardly any statistics that allow comparative studies at different scales.

There is a broad and imprecise conception of the term fishing Tourism, an umbrella that includes a large number of marine and land activities [37]. Fishing tourism can be conceptualised as a culture-based tourism: the culture-motivated, -inspired, and -attracted tourism [38] cited by [39] (p. 90), [31] (p. 145). It is also necessary to consider that the tourism industry in rural areas is based on nature and nature-based activities, such as fishing [39] (p. 89), and thus fishing tourism has its roots in rural tourism, sharing some similarities [40,41]. For some authors, Fishing Tourism includes a series of activities among which recreational or sport fishing stand out, but also different tourism industries such as accommodation, restaurants, retail, and services for tourists [36]. In relation to its definition, Kauppila and Karjalainen [39], following Hänninen and Tonder [42], consider that recreational fishing includes fishing tourism, distinguish between *tourism fishing and fishing tourism*. For tourism fishing, fishing is only one of several reasons to choose a destination. In the case of fishing tourism, fishing is the main motivation for tourists [39] (p. 89). Other authors, however, restrict fishing tourism to a recreational activity in which fishermen take tourists aboard fishing vessels to go fishing [30] (p. 85). Chung-Ling Cheng and Ya-Chiao Chang, in their study focused on the development of fishing tourism in Taiwan, recall previous experiences in Ecuador [43], Mexico [44], South Korea [45], and also Italy [46] and Scotland [47], where tourists accompany fishermen, and even fish, dive or sight whales from traditional fishing boats, or stay in fishermen's houses in some cases [30] (p. 84). These studies reflect the tensions between small-scale fishing and sport fishing, and focus on the role that fishermen play as providers of tourism services, and the competition with professional tourism agencies.

Finally, the meaning of fishing tourism used in this study refers to those activities carried out by fishing professionals, complementing their professional activity: activities carried out on board professional fishing and aquaculture boats, guided tours, accommodation in sea professionals' houses, or gastronomic activities. We use the definition of fishing tourism as included in the different rules that regulate the activity in Spain, at a national and regional level, and in studies focused on the evolution of the activity in Spain [32,40,41,48–55]. This type of tourism includes the activities carried out by groups of sea professionals, with the aim of diversifying and complementing the main fishing and shellfish activity (Preamble to Galician Fishing Law 11/2008) The development of this type of tourism in Europe has its origins in Italy [53], where it was included in legislation as of 1982, with modifications in 1999, 2001 and 2004. In this sense, the following concepts were defined in Italy at the beginning of the 1980s: (i) fishing tourism referred to non-crew members boarding fishing boats for the purpose of recreational and tourist activities; (ii) and *ittiturismo*, which includes activities carried out by fishermen who offer their houses or facilities to tourists and visitors, through hotel and restaurant services, and recreational and cultural activities. The Italian regulations also provide for the development, by fishermen, of complementary activities such as the processing, conservation and marketing of fishery products. The Lega Pesca National Association of Fishing Cooperatives estimated that 800 fishing

vessels had been authorised to conduct fishing tourism in Italy in 2003 [56]. Its early development in Italy helped promote the activity in the south of Europe in later years.

This tourism typology is characterised by a varied functionality: economic, social, cultural and environmental. Fishing tourism allows sea professionals to diversify and complement their income, generate new employment opportunities, reduce pressure on fishing resources, and raise awareness among professionals and tourists about the need to preserve the coastal environment [48]. As studied by Nicolosi et al. [57] in the Southern Tyrrhenian Coastline, the development of fisheries-related tourism activities such as “pesca-turismo” and “itti-turismo” can play an important role in the diversification of local economies, generating additional income for fishermen, and contributing to the promotion of local products through direct sales, restaurants and events related to fishing activities. There are also the synergies between fishing and tourism, which favour the patrimonial activation of the fishermen’s knowledge and traditional practices [58], and which intensify the use of the cultural heritage of fishing as a resource for the community [31,59] (p. 155–160), helping to promote the maritime heritage—both tangible and intangible—and to value the crafts of the sea [60]. The work of N.T. Rubio-Cisneros et al. on the development of fishing and tourism on Holbox Island (Mexico) [61], states that the conservation of resources, as well as facing the management of the accelerated development of tourism, benefits from the incorporation of the traditional knowledge of fishermen.

2.2. Fishing Tourism in Spain and Galicia

The decrease of primary sector activities in the economy of rural areas in Spain has been accompanied by the presence of industrial and tertiary activities in these areas, and a growing interest in tourism [49,62]. Ivars [62], citing Vera and Marchena [63], highlights the commitment of many regions—not specialised in tourism—in the development of rural-natural tourism as a tool to favour regional economic diversification.

According to Santos [64], the development of tourism since the 1990s in Galicia is related to the increase in the number of accommodation establishments on the regional coast, and the promotion of inland tourism linked to the crisis in the rural world, the search for economic diversification, and the interest in other types of tourism, different from sun and beach destinations. Much of the accommodation offer of this inland tourism is located near the sea. This author points out that tourism, and inland tourism in particular, were favoured by the political decentralisation in Spain—which allowed Galicia to design its own tourism policy starting in the 1980s, thanks to the European programmes for rural development, and the Galician administration initiatives. Santos and Trillo-Santamaría [65] link the development of tourism activities in Galicia with the construction of a regional image based on its rural character compared to the rest of Spain, and with rural tourism as one of the priorities of the regional tourism policy.

The introduction of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in Europe, and of a series of adjustment measures to reduce fishing capacity, especially in some countries such as Spain, has had a series of negative effects on communities dependent on fishing. Successive funds dependent on the CFP have been allocated towards a series of measures with the aim of avoiding or mitigating these socioeconomic impacts on coastal communities [19,48,66]. Additionally, the economic diversification of these territories has been promoted, which has favoured the investment of numerous European funds in tourism projects [49,67], following the previous experience of the Leader Programme in rural areas [25]. Additionally, small-scale fishing has been immersed for decades in a process of crisis and loss of economic profitability, both in Europe and Spain in general [32,68], and in Galicia in particular [50,69,70], which has contributed to transforming the perception of fishing as a way of life, opening up to the development of new economic diversification activities [60].

It is in this context that fishing tourism has evolved in Spain and in Galicia, favoured by the strong synergies created between the tourism and fishing sectors since the last decades of the twentieth century, and by the opportunities that this activity offers, in terms of employment and income, to coastal communities [32,37,40,41,48–54,71–73]. In any case, although many fishing tourism projects have

been started in Galicia [40,74], their evolution and continuity has been uneven, due to the difficulties they face, among which are the lack of tourism training for fishermen [41], and the lack of continued institutional support and specific regulations that regulate the activity [53] (p. 175).

3. Materials and Methods

This work incorporates the results of a literature review on tourism and local development, with particular attention to fishing tourism and its contribution to economic diversification and multi-functionality in coastal areas. Google Scholar and Science Direct have been used as Internet search engines using the key words Fishing Tourism, Marine Tourism, Pesca-turismo, Ittiturismo. Work focused on recreational and sport fishing, where fishermen did not play an active role as activity hosts, have been rejected for analysis. Emphasis is placed on European Funds in support of the Common Fisheries Policy, and the application of the bottom-up approach to this policy since 2007, with the objective of sustainable development of coastal and fishing areas.

Firstly, a detailed study of the technical documentation of the CFP framework, Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG), European Fisheries Fund (EFF), European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), and Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs), was performed through the analysis of regulations, and strategic and operational programmes. The information published by the Spanish Government related to fisheries and aquaculture diversification [51] have also been taken into account, as well as data from the Spanish Network of Fisheries Groups (REGP), which provides data on investment and employment for each of the actions financed, at regional and local level.

In a second phase, the planning phase conducted by the Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) in the coastal areas of Galicia has been analysed. These groups are partnerships between fisheries actors and other local private and public stakeholders. Together, they design and implement a local development strategy (LDS) to address their area's needs be they economic, social and/or environmental. Based on their strategy, the FLAGs select and provide funding to local projects that contribute to local development in their areas [75]. This research has considered the LDS approved by FLAGs in Galicia (7 in 2007–2013 period and 8 in 2014–2020 period), in order to analyse the importance given to tourism as an engine for diversification, and specifically to fishing tourism.

In a third phase, focused on the case study, the investments of public funds made to companies and institutions between 1995 and 2018 were analysed using official data published by the Directorate General for Fisheries Management from the Spanish government, which show the nominal data for beneficiaries of EU funding through the FIFG and the EFF, which is successively updated (the latest updated version from 11/7/2018 is available on <https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/pesca/temas/fondos-europeos/iniciativa-comunitaria-de-transparencia/default.aspx>). This data is complemented with data published by the networks of European fishing groups (https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet2/node_en), national (<<https://regp.pesca.mapama.es/>) and Galician (<https://galp.xunta.gal/en>). The joint analysis of the strategies and the projects financed allows us to see, in the implementation phase of the funds, the level of development achieved in the objectives defined in the strategy.

Finally, the methodological work was completed with the study of the position of the regional government in relation to the development of fishing tourism in Galicia, analysing the economic, political and technical support for this form of tourism.

4. Results

4.1. Normative Framework

In relation to the concept of fishing tourism, as indicated in previous sections, there is a lack of accurate terminology. In most cases it is used in a broad sense, to designate all kinds of leisure activities related to the fishing sector, in a maritime or coastal environment, carried out by professionals of the sea or by tourist agents. In the case of Galicia, it is used as a synonym for Marine Tourism, as included in the regional tourism legislation, and in the tourism information materials published by the Galician

administration [76]. Even so, from a regulatory point of view, the activity is well defined in national and regional fishing laws, and is restricted exclusively to activities carried out by professionals in the fishing sector, as a complement or as an alternative to the main fishing or aquaculture activity. Fishing tourism encompasses various activities, the main one “*pesca-turismo*”, is a modality that specifically refers to the activities carried out on board professional fishing and aquaculture vessels, which in Spain are registered in a specific census by law. Due to the type of activity, and the working conditions on board, it is the small-scale fishing vessels that are directly related to this activity, as they develop their work in inland or coastal waters, leaving and returning to port on the same day.

Since the beginning of the twenty first century, in Spain and Galicia, fishing tourism has been included in the fishing laws with the aim of promoting the economic diversification of the fishing and aquaculture sector. This is the case of law 3/2001 in Spain—which incorporate fishing tourism, “*pesca-turismo*” and aquaculture tourism—among the measures to be promoted by the Spanish government, and Law 33/2014, which reinforces the role of fishing tourism, defining its typologies and establishing the conditions to develop the activity. In Galicia, Law 11/2008 on Fishing, devotes a specific chapter to marine tourism, linked to the European Fishery Fund (EFF), where the activities that can be included in this type of tourism are detailed, and these are the “*pesca-turismo*” in fishing boats, guided tours, accommodation in sea professionals’ houses, and activities aimed at promoting and enhancing the consumption of gastronomic products related to fishing, shellfish farming and aquaculture. Additionally, the Plans and Strategies for tourism in Galicia in the last decade regard marine tourism among the priority tourism products in Galicia, as is the case with the Galicia Comprehensive Plan for Tourism [77], and the 2020 Galicia Tourism Strategy [78]. It is worth noting the attempt by the Galician government to publish a regulation for the development of ititourism between 2009 and 2010, but has never materialised.

In Spanish and Galician laws, these activities receive a specific mention as elements of diversification and complementarity in addition to the main fishing and shellfish activities, which allow the revitalisation of coastal and rural areas, and the promotion and appreciation of cultural fishing heritage. The latest measure has been the approval in April 2019, of a state regulation that establishes the conditions for the development of the fishing tourism activity carried out on board fishing and aquaculture vessels (Royal Decree 239/2019), with the objective of guaranteeing regulatory security and allowing the broad development of the activity in the Spanish coastal context. The rule bans tourists from fishing activities. It is still too early to assess the impact of the regulation on the development of the activity, although part of the sector considers that it introduces great administrative and bureaucratic complexity, in addition to increasing the economic investment needed to start the activity.

4.2. State and Regional Governments Support

As mentioned above, the legislative and regulatory initiatives on fishing tourism have been included in the framework of strategic plans and programmes developed by the Spanish and Galician governments, guiding diversification in fishing areas. These plans and strategies are financially supported by CFP’s financial instruments. This is the case of the FIGG between 1994 and 2006, which favoured diversification in the early stages of fishing tourism. Additionally, later, the EFF (2007–2013) and the EMFF (2014–2020) funds, establishing among their objectives the support towards the diversification, or the economic and social restructuring, of the areas that face socio-economic difficulties due to the evolution of the fishing sector (EFF, Article 43), and promoting the diversification of the fishermen’ income through the development of complementary activities, such as investments onboard vessels, sport fishing tourism, restaurants, environmental services related to fishing and educational activities on fishing (EMFF, article 30).

In this context, the Spanish Ministry with powers in the area of fishing drew up the White Paper on Fishing in 2000, where special mention is made to fishing tourism and where the progress of the main research projects focused on this subject is included [79]. Similarly, in the 2013–2020 Fisheries and Aquaculture Diversification Strategic Plan (DIVERPES Plan), the Ministry set out fishing tourism,

and its varieties, among the most important diversification alternatives for coastal areas dependent on fishing [80]. In supporting fishing tourism, there have been collaboration agreements between the administration and the universities that, for example, have made it possible to draw up a diagnosis on fishing tourism in Spain [50].

As a result, many research projects, mostly funded by European funds (Table 1), have produced fishing tourism analyses, evaluations and pilot projects in Spain and its regions [37,40,41,48]. We highlight three projects due to their importance: (1) the Sagital Project “Adaptation Services for the Management of Fishing Tourism Initiatives in Coastal Areas”, developed within the framework of the EQUAL II Initiative of the European Social Fund (ESF) in the period 2005–2007, coordinated by the Polytechnic University of Madrid, which concludes that there is an interest by fishermen towards fishing tourism as a means of recognition of their role as managers of the sea, and an increasingly favourable approach by the administration and associations of the sector [49]. Additionally, two projects led by the Technological Centre of the Sea Foundation (CETMAR)—foundation with the involvement of the Spanish and Galician governments, Galician universities and members of the fishing sector; (2) the “Seaside Reorientation Activities” (SEREA) project, funded by the ESF between 2006 and 2008, which highlights that marine professionals who participate in fishing tourism actions must undergo a training process to communicate their experience to tourists and promote the need to value the environment and the activities carried out at sea [55]; (3) the Project “Seamen and Women, Project for diversification in the sectors of fisheries, shellfish gathering and aquaculture” (SEAWO-MEN), funded by Interreg IIIC between 2004 and 2007, where meeting points between members of the regional administration and the fishing sector were organised to advance the development of fishing tourism. In parallel, and with regional funds, the Galician government has also supported the development of research activities through agreements with Galician universities. This is the case of the project “Study on fishing tourism. Examples of good practices developed in Spain”, funded in 2006 by the Galician government tourism department.

Table 1. Projects related to fishing tourism in Spain and Galicia.

Acronym	Years	Funds	Participating Countries
PRESPO	2009–2011	Interreg Atlantic Area	FR, PT, ES
SEREA	2006–2008	FSE	FR, IT, ES
SAGITAL	2005–2007	Equal II, FSE	
SEAWO-MEN	2004–2006	Interreg IIIC	ES, IR, NO
MARIMED	2004–2005	Interreg IIIB	IT, FR, ES
MEDAS21	2002–2004	Equal I, FSE	ES
SOUTH-ATLANTIC	2002–2004	Equal I, FSE	ES

Source: Own work.

4.3. Fishing Tourism Experiences in Galicia

Fishing tourism activities in Galicia began around 2004, following the example of Italy, and gradually spreading among Galician coastal communities, in most cases supported by guilds (fishermen’ associations), non-profit public-sector corporations, which act as consultation and collaboration bodies of the regional government for fisheries issues [81]. This is the case of the guild of Lira, a small village of less than 100 inhabitants in western Galicia, the first to launch the Fishing and Marine Tourism Workshop, with the aim of enlivening the social environment of this fishing community and to make the work of fishermen known to society as a whole [82]. In 2007, a fishing marine reserve was created in this same village, aimed at promoting sustainable fishing and favouring strong synergies between tourism and environmental awareness programmes in the marine environment, resulting in the first experiences of fishing tourism. In the early 2000s, fishing tourism activities were launched in other Galician ports, including those initiated by shellfish women’s associations to promote and highlight the fishing and shellfish culture [52]. This is the case of the

Guimatur cultural association, created in 2004, which organised guided tours through the shellfish banks, aimed at both visitors and schoolchildren, advocating the fishing culture and the traditional values of work at sea [83]. There are other relevant examples in which several fishermen' guilds have grouped together to develop marine tourism initiatives, such as Pescanatur, an association created in 2006, bringing together three guilds in the province of Pontevedra, to offer tourism packages focused on food tours to taste local fish and shellfish, tours with shellfish women through their places of work, or pesca-turismo experiences [52].

In this way, projects and initiatives related to fishing tourism, which would have a greater role as of 2006 with the approval of the EFF, emerged in Galicia. The development of Axis 4 of the EFF (2007–2013), specifically focused in the sustainable development of fisheries areas, with the aim of supporting economic diversification, played a fundamental role in the dissemination of fishing tourism in Galicia [53], as stated in the preamble of the Galician Fishing Law. Thus, in 2008 the creation of Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) began with the selection of 7 groups and 7 fisheries areas, and later expanded to 8 [24]. FLAGs design LDS that guide European and regional investment in order to strengthen the economy of fishing communities through economic diversification, increasing the income of marine professionals and protecting employment. Fishing tourism has been the object of special attention in the local development strategies designed and approved by the FLAGs (Tables 2 and 3), which have funded numerous fishing tourism projects and created cooperation networks between the different FLAGs at regional level. Among them was the creation of the Marine Tourism Product Club, Mar Galaica, launched in 2012 with EFF funds, which generated the interest of all the FLAGs, and had the support of the fishing and tourism departments of the Galician government [76]. Mar Galaica was created with the aim of building a platform for the dissemination of activities related to the fishing leisure offer and its cultural heritage [24,40]. In the current programming period (2014–2020), economic diversification activities continue to be funded in coastal communities, and there is a commitment to fishing tourism projects, gastronomy and restaurants, and fishing environmental services and educational activities (Supplementary material, Tables S1 and S2).

Table 2. Fishing tourism (FT) in local development strategy (LDS) by Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) (2007–2013).

FLAG	Importance of FT in LDS 2007–2013	FT is A Line of Action in the LDS	Public Expenditure Budget for FT EUR	Total Public Expenditure Budget LDS EUR
1 Vigo—A Guarda	Not mentioned	No	0	3,711,630.01
2 Pontevedra	Very low	No	0	3,711,630.00
3 Arousa	Very high	Yes	528,807.50	3,711,630.00
4 Costa Sostible	Very high	Yes	813,396.83	8,133,333.33
5 Costa da Morte	Medium	Yes	798,199.90	7,423,259.00
6 Southern Artabro + 7 Northern Artabro	Mean	Yes (includes marine tourism, coastal tourism, and sport fishing)	69,567	3,711,630.00
8 Mariña-Ortegal	High	Yes	657,934.63	3,711,630.00

Source: LDS.

The local development strategies (LDS) designed by the FLAGs in Galicia in the period 2007–2013 granted tourism a relevant role in achieving the objective of economic diversification. But there is a big difference amongst the 7 FLAGs in regard to the importance they give to fishing tourism. In some cases, this type of tourism does not appear in the strategies, or it is barely acknowledged, as in the Ría de Vigo-Aguarda (1) and Pontevedra (2) FLAGs, on the southern coast of Galicia. In the opposite case, the Costa da Morte (5) and Costa Sostible (4) FLAGs allocate a significant part of their investment forecast to actions related to marine tourism and “pesca-turismo”. As an example, we will focus on the Costa Sostible FLAG (4), which in its LDS includes actions towards both the creation of a product and the improvement of its commercialisation. Among them are the creation of new types of hotels

“hotels marineros” and restaurants “tascas marineras”, the recovery of fishing houses with traditional typologies, or the creation of a Marine Product Plan. The analysis of the LDS shows that they apply a broad concept of fishing tourism, which includes all those activities carried out on the coast, related to fishing and marine cultural heritage, but not carried out exclusively by sea professionals. As a result, a significant part of the European funds used to finance fishing tourism have not benefited fishermen, although they have benefited broad sectors of coastal communities.

Table 3. Fishing tourism (FT) in local development strategy (LDS) by FLAGs (2014–2020).

FLAG	Importance of FT in LDS 2007–2013	FT is a Line of Action in the LDS	Public Expenditure Budget for FT EUR	Total Public Expenditure Budget LDS EUR
1 Vigo—A Guarda	High	Yes	451,472.40	5,016,360.03
2 Pontevedra	Medium	Yes	294,000	5,714,908.00
3 Arousa	Very high	Yes	442,604.76	7,451,258.55
4 Costa Sostible	High	Yes	176,941.33	7,077,653.16
5 Costa da Morte	Medium	No	0	7,304,701.37
6 Southern Artabro	Very high	Yes	360,000.00	4,000,000.00
7 Northern Artabro	Very high	Yes	571,324.12	6,143,270.06
8 Mariña-Ortegal	High	Yes	677,199.85	7,619,688.84

Source: LDS.

The LDS approved by the FLAGs for the 2014–2020 period was created thanks to the experience in the implementation of fishing tourism projects and initiatives in the previous programming period. In some cases, such as the Northern Artabro FLAG (7), a specific working group on Fishing Tourism was created for the development of the new LDS [84]. In general, all the Galician LDS acknowledge the importance of fishing tourism for the economic diversification, and continue to apply it in its broadest sense, including within fishing tourism activities that enhance maritime cultural heritage, the transformation of seafood products, riverside carpentry, guide tours, retail and hospitality, and also “*pesca-turismo*” [85]. As a result of the experience from previous projects, some of the strategies have identified challenges and threats that must be taken into account for the future development of the activity, such as the complexity of the administrative processes, or the excess of fishing tourism promotion and marketing when the sector is not yet able to implement these activities [86] (p. 19). Additionally, there is the need to create synergies with nautical tourism [87], and take advantage of the existing synergies between fishing tourism and wine tourism [88].

After analysing the projects approved by the Galician FLAGs, with the support of EFF and EMFF funds, only a few have been promoted or have had professionals from the fishing sector as beneficiaries of the funds. According to information from the Spanish Network of Fishing Groups, of the 341 projects funded by the EMFF in the eight Galician FLAGs, 112 include fishing tourism among their lines of action. It should be noted that of these 112 fishing tourism projects, 40% correspond to initiatives to increase or improve the accommodation and catering offer in fishing communities. Fishing tourism projects that entail greater complexity for their implementation and that require public-private governance agreements in these communities, are fewer. This is the case of projects related to the promotion of marine cultural heritage—tangible and intangible—and environmental awareness, which only account for 16% of the total (Supplementary material, Table S2). We highlight among them the “Mar das Illas” project started in 2017 as a cooperation action between 3 FLAGs, Vigo-A Guarda (1), Pontevedra (2) and Arousa (3), with the aim of training professionals in the fishing sector with an interest in developing fishing tourism and pesca-turismo within the National Park of Galician Atlantic Islands (Parque Nacional Marítimo Terrestre das Illas Atlánticas de Galicia). This project was funded with EUR 58,400 from the EMFF for the years 2017 and 2018. It has currently been extended, and in August 2020 several pilot projects for pesca-tourism and fishing tourism have been developed.

Finally, it should be noted that the support by the regional government towards fishing tourism in recent years has not only been financial, but it has also had a markedly political nature, as seen in public

demonstrations of interest by the main heads of the Administration, both in the form of statements in the press, visits to ports, and participation in the activities organised by the guilds, as reported by the regional and national press.

5. Discussion

The effort led by the Spanish State to promote the regulation and promotion of fishing tourism activities has allowed the development of laws and regulations (Supplementary material, Table S3), numerous research projects and pilot projects, which on a regional scale, have addressed the design of tools and training actions to give support to those interested in starting this type of activity [49]. Fishing tourism has an important relationship with fishing innovation [48], and in coastal communities, social innovations are in many cases related to new tourism products linked to maritime heritage and the presence of women in fishing and shellfish activities [24]. Some studies show that fishermen' organisations that implement fishing tourism projects also tend to conduct innovative projects related to sustainable fishing or technological innovation [55]. Despite the interesting results of a large part of these projects and their experiences in relation to the implementation of pilot fishing tourism projects, no work has yet been carried out to standardise the results in order to design a fishing tourism development strategy at state level.

The proliferation of fishing tourism activities in Galicia has been, as in the rest of Spain, closely linked to funds from the European Fisheries Fund—aimed at the economic diversification of coastal communities—and to the regional policy, which incorporates marine tourism in regional fishing regulations. For the regional government, marine tourism includes the activities carried out by groups of sea professionals, with the aim of diversifying and complementing the main activity of fishing and shellfish (Preamble of Law 11/2008 of fishing of Galicia). Even so, this activity in Galicia still has ample room for development. It is necessary to study in depth the challenges of this type of tourism and take into account the following factors:

- A. In relation to fishermen: Fishermen interested in fishing tourism must have the experience, skills and capital necessary to meet the regulatory obligations and financial demands for the development of the activity [89]. The community of fishing professionals, in most cases, has difficulties in adapting their working hours to tourism activities or to accommodate tourists on fishing boats. The development of the *pesca-turismo* activity poses multiple challenges, since the vessels do not offer the comfortable conditions that tourists expect (in terms of sanitary equipment, resting areas or space available on board). Nor do fishermen have adequate training to make their activity known to visitors in a didactic, structured and motivating way.
- B. In relation to the normative framework: In addition, in the case of *pesca-turismo*, tourists onboard the vessels are not allowed to fish (Article 74, Law 33/2014), so their activity is limited to the mere contemplation of nature, which may contradict their expectations, since many of the promotional campaigns for *pesca-turismo* products are more related to adventure tourism. This is the case of the company Pesca Turismo (www.pescaturismospain.com) which uses slogans such as “Embárcate con Pescaturismo Spain y pon rumbo a la aventura” (“Embark with Pescaturismo Spain and start the adventure”).
- C. In relation to the institutional and sector related associations support: The fishermen' guilds, leaders of many of the pioneering experiences of fishing tourism in Galicia, do not show strong support for fishing tourism, especially in the case of *pesca-turismo*, due to the regulatory complexity of the activity and their lack of knowledge of the tourism sector. In addition, development of fishing tourism in Galicia requires a strategic plan, designed on the basis of a participatory process and with a bottom-up approach. A strategy developed by the fishermen' guilds, the associations representing the professionals of the sea (ship owners, shellfish women, small-scale fishing, mussel producers) with the support of the FLAGs, the advice of the academia, and coordinated with the regional government and the bodies representing professionals in the tourism sector (Galician Tourism Cluster) is needed. A roadmap should be drawn up to

acknowledge the interest in fishing tourism by the different sectors of the sea following a decade of experiences, which have identified potentialities, shown the interest of the coastal communities, and made them aware of the problems to be faced. There have been projects, such as SAGITAL, mentioned above, that have developed pilot projects and participatory processes focused on fishing tourism opportunities. This small-scale experience should be taken into account when defining a regional-scale strategy [49]. Additionally, it is necessary to coordinate the support for the development of fishing tourism. This is due to the fact that the existence of economic stimuli that public funds have caused this promotion has not been in accordance with the existing offer, thereby generating unrealistic expectations [86].

6. Conclusions

There is unanimity in considering fishing tourism as a tourism modality with great potential, due to the benefits it can bring to communities in which small-scale fishing plays a significant role in the economy. Benefits related to the revitalisation of the fishing sector, and also to the promotion of fishing cultural heritage, so fishermen can continue to exploit their knowledge and professional skills, and maintain the social networks linked to fishing [89].

Its development is still limited and irregular in Spain, and it does not constitute a relevant contribution of supplementary income for the majority of fishing professionals in the communities where it takes place [48,52]. Among the main difficulties identified for the implementation of fishing tourism are the lack of experience and previous training of fishermen in tourism activities, the irregular distribution and lack of monitoring of the implemented initiatives, and the existing legal uncertainty [54]. Until very recently, the Spanish legal system did not allow the use of professional fishing vessels for activities other than extractive activities and, therefore, prevented the embarkation of people other than the vessel's crew [49] (p. 1640). In this way, the development of the *pesca-turismo* modality has been restricted, and subject to the search for formulas that would allow it to circumvent this regulatory restriction. Authors like Nicolosi et al. [57], point out other factors, such as how the potential of *pesca turismo* and *ittiturismo* in the Southern Tyrrhenian Coastline is underestimated by the fishing sector due to its lower profitability in relation to fishing, and because the advanced age of fishermen reduces their interest in innovation and access to new forms of communication.

Fishing tourism has generally included elements of environmental education and awareness, and therefore has contributed to transforming the attitudes and values of the parties involved, in local communities and the fishing sector, and of course, visitors. This is evident from the perspective of the sustainability of the fishing sector, in relation to the environmental awareness of the parties involved and the recognition of trades linked to the sea, as well as the sustainability of the coastal tourism model, by complementing the sun and beach offer with new tourism products related to fishing [53] (p. 177).

One of the fundamental objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy is the reduction of fishing captures in Europe, which has had serious consequences for communities dependent on fishing. The policies of economic diversification have pushed many fishermen to consider the possibility of combining their trade with other activities, such as tourism, for which in most cases they have barely received any training. Turning sea professionals into hosts of their own vessels, and part-time tour guides, is a complex task that requires a debate on the opportunity to undertake this path, the means, the pace and the expected objectives. This process, if carried out, must be directed and coordinated by the fishing organisations, which must reflect on how to reconcile tourism and professional fishing so that professionals in the sector are interested in these activities, favouring the promotion of traditional trades and knowledge, and the fishing cultural heritage in general.

Supplementary Materials: The following are available online at <http://www.mdpi.com/2073-445X/9/11/437/s1>, Table S1: EMFF Projects in Galicia (2014–2020), Table S2: EMFF Projects with line of action in Fishing Tourism. Galicia (2014–2020), Table S3: Current laws and regulations that have introduced definitions and considerations on fishing or marine tourism and fishing tourism in Spain.

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