

FINAL

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Priority Area on Maritime Safety and Security “PA Safe” Flagship Project to lay the groundwork for developing a plan to reduce the number of accidents in fisheries

Sweden 13th - 14th March 2014

Baltic fleet data supplied by authorities

Year	Length of vessels - 5-12	Length of vessels - 12-20	Length of vessels - 20-40	Length of vessels - 40 and up	Total Number of vessels
2013	558	51	37	9	655

Active Fishermen/women

Commercial fishing license			Total
1466			1466

The importance of refresher courses: well implemented: liked by the fishermen

Visit to Öckerö Maritime Centre

Bjönhuvudsvägen 45

Box 1088, 475 22 Öckerö

Sweden

www.sjosakerhet.nu

Details (in Swedish) on the courses on offer:

http://www.sjosakerhet.nu/FUC/Kurser_Boka.html

Meetings with Janne Johansson, Director of the Centre, and Petter Nystedt, responsible for courses

On 13th and 14th March 2014, the Maritime Centre held a two-day course on safety onboard for fishermen. The course components were: fire-fighting theory and practice, health and safety, personal safety, accidents prevention and survival, and stability. Time was made available for us to talk to the fishermen and discuss health and safety issues.

Öckerö Maritime Centre is one of about here training centres in Sweden providing basic fisheries maritime training. It began back in 1997 as the fisheries education centre (FUC). Janne Johansson, the Director of the Centre, is a former fisherman from a strong fisheries family background and his thinking is very much fisheries oriented. He pointed out that the Centre has been built based on expertise from fisheries. With that thinking in mind, it is easier

to train a fisherman into working as a mariner in other branches, rather than to turn a mariner into a fisherman.

In 2008 it changed its name to the Öckerö Maritime Centre and widened its scope to provide education and training in other maritime sectors as well as fisheries. Its overall aim is to educate those working in the fishery and other seafaring sectors in safety and related skills and competences. It works closely with the Swedish Maritime Administration, the Swedish Fishermen's Federation and the Swedish Sea Rescue Society. The courses meet STCW (F) requirements.

The Centre does not have many permanent teaching staff in house. It has contact to specialist teachers with specific skills whom they can hire for specific courses. Their normal daily work deals with the subjects that they teach and this ensures that the courses are closely linked to the real world. That gives for a more dynamic and fluid provision of teaching.

The Swedish Maritime Administration provides overall competence in safety and rescue at sea. It also provides the accreditation of the courses offered at the Centre.

The Swedish Fishermen's Federation has worked closely with the Centre in developing the safety training courses for the fishermen.

The management board of the Centre draws on local representatives from the area – including two representatives from the fisheries organisation. This also gives strong input and support from the local community.

The Centre has modern classrooms and a lecture theatre, conference facilities, as well as accommodation of a very high standard. The teaching facilities are well built, always with an eye to the practical elements of teaching: fire fighting, safety in the water, a machine and equipment room, as well as a vessel chamber to provide instruction in how to stop leaks and water inflows. This latter was held up as a good example of what can be done at minimal expense and with few resources. On all courses there is a good mix of theory and practice – and this is emphasised as one of the Centre's strengths. The fact that the Centre does not have a specific training vessel is not seen as a weakness of the education and training. The hands-on training, using the facilities provided is considered adequate.

In order to work as a deck hand on board a fishing vessel, the requirement is to have undergone a two day safety course.

Those who choose to take a three year fisheries technical or the maritime technical programme also follow the two day safety course, but also gives them the Basic safety Manila training as well as qualification as deck officer class VIII.

Studying at school gives fishers or students the chance to study further to reach class VII or VI.

A three year course qualifies crew members to work on vessels up to 24 metres.

For those skippering fishing vessels over 12 metres there is a three day course in navigation, stability, working environment and legislation.

On top of that are two day refresher courses for fishermen – this is compulsory every five years for all crew members on fishing vessels. The staff at the Centre are aware of the fact that the course has to be meaningful and valuable and add value to the work of the crew. The

fishermen have to feel that they get something out of being there. Days away from the vessel are lost days in terms of earnings. The refresher courses cost 3.500 SEK which together with the cost of issuing the certificate 1200 SEK is not seen as expensive (plus taxes).

The fisheries sector in Sweden is getting smaller, and this is one of the reasons why the Centre has expanded its range of courses to cover other maritime sectors. The Centre is also aware of the fact of the declining fisheries sector and has a close dialogue with the Swedish Fishermen's Federation on initiatives to promote the sector and to find opportunities for funding. Talk has been about developing a "strategy" for this. The Centre has been involved in projects dealing with selectivity of gears in the nephrops and cod fisheries. They pointed out that it is easier to secure money for this type of activity than for activities connected with safety.

They are also investigating and considering working together with Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, to do some research into accident prevention and the working environment. The one strong aim is to obtain better accident statistics in order to analyse and improve working and safety practices.

A very strong ambition and plan is to extend the Centre with an indoor pool for safety training. Although the centre is located right along the coast, it would be an added advantage with an indoor pool which can simulate different weather conditions in safety exercises. This development is dependent on establishing funding.

The Centre has been carrying out mobile education and training courses, whereby the safety training has been going to the fishermen in the ports. The Centre has tried this out with some degree of success. The motivation for this came from the general reluctance by fishermen to come to Öckerö, as well as the wish to increase focus on safety onboard in practical situations at the workplace on the vessel. The limitation of this has been practical difficulties in providing training in fire fighting at the ports. So this is gradually being phased out.

When the training courses take place at the school, the fishermen are in a total environment away from the pressures of their work. This is especially seen as an advantage for fishermen who work single handed on their vessels. Another aspect is that whereas it may be difficult to take subjects up in the classroom, issues can be discussed together during the evening in a more relaxed way.

There is the strong appreciation that fishermen are in their way "special". They cannot be forced into doing things, but the Centre is very conscious of the need to get them to focus on their own safety.

This also includes the need to increase focus on the working environment. They highlight that it has been difficult to find good quality education material on this and this could be a useful addition. They referred to something called "systematic working environment". Material exists for other types of vessels, but not for fishing vessels. Still the attitude that "you fish until you drop" prevails.

There is also an awareness that increased safety has come about with improved catch handling machinery on board, pumps etc. More machine-operated procedures are giving a better working environment on board. They highlighted the fact that it is an active choice by the fishermen to invest in such material to make the fishery more effective, rather than to buy something to improve personal safety, such as personal locator beacon (the thinking is "It

won't happen to me"). So the need is still there to convince the fishermen that safety is something to be taken seriously.

The perception at the Centre is that injuries are on the way down. Statistics from 2012 from the Swedish Transport Agency provide information on casualties and accidents for the entire Swedish fisheries sector: A total of 6 accidents: sinking 1, serious accidents 2, less serious accidents 3; fatalities 1, injuries 1.

The questions asked is: do we get the full picture on reporting on accidents? There is the perception that a lot of the less serious accidents do not get reported because it involves too much paperwork. Knowing about these accidents and their causes would help to improve awareness and how to reduce risks.

Discussions with the fishermen

The fishermen are pleased with the course here. They appreciate the Centre which functions well and they appreciate that it is important to have a hands on approach, testing and trying things in a practical way, with an appropriate amount of theory and reflection.

They value the chance to meet with colleagues and to discuss relevant issues.

Some of younger fishermen had reflected on this in advance and confirmed the importance of this safety training – starting now from a young age. Their motto was “Safety wisely.”

Some pointed to the latest developments in communications as a really good development for improving safety.

They highlighted the general problems with too many rules. Sometimes the rules do not anticipate the implications they have for safety and the stresses they can create for the fishermen. Quota and fisheries management rules should also take into account safety considerations. A concrete example is management by effort (fishing days) which comes on top of quota management – it does not promote a very flexible form of fishery and can create stresses which affect the working environment. Another example they gave is the requirement to report to the authorities before coming into the port at specific times: bad weather may make this impossible or delay this. There was a strong wish from the fishermen for fisheries administrations to coordinate their work and legislation with other authorities and to consult with the fishermen when preparing regulations. There was also wish from them that the control and inspection work – which is a necessary part of the fishery – does not interfere with or undermine safety at work.

They appreciate the time spent reading accident report investigations. Finding out the reasons why accidents happen and what was done about them was useful training in accident prevention.

Latest developments

A recent proposal put forward by the Swedish Transport Agency is to reduce the length of the refresher course to one day only. They explain that this is possible whilst still meeting the requirements of the STCW (F) Convention. They suggest that this could be done as a form of self study instead of attending a course at an education establishment. There is strong objection to this from the Centre because it will severely limit what the Centre can manage to

teach. It will be more a formality than actual teaching. They anticipate that the fishermen will also object to this proposal. A lot of effort has been put into convincing the fishermen of the importance and usefulness of the refresher courses, so it will be very regrettable if this recommendation is implemented.

Key recommendations from the Centre:

Maintain the status quo on refresher courses. A strong recommendation to keep the two day refresher course as it is. It was seen as effective. It is a routine, which is accepted by the fishermen and supported by the Swedish Fishermen's Federation.

More information/teaching material on working environment: health safety at work in general and during working practices, personal maritime protection and in connection with carrying out the daily work on board. This is not perceived as the most the exciting part of the course, but it is important. Thought could be given to producing some material here that can be used in a more practical way.

Involve the fishermen when preparing rules and make sure that the rules do not conflict with or undermine safety.

Fishermen highlight improved communication devices as one of the BIG factors towards improved safety



This tank is a simple and practical tool used at the centre for teaching trainees in how to deal with leaks and water intake

Swedish Fishermen's Federation
<http://www.yrkesfiskarna.se/>
(In Swedish only)

Swedish Maritime Administration
<http://www.sjofartsverket.se/en/>

Swedish Sea Rescue Society
<http://www.sjoraddning.se/ine-english/>

Chalmers University of Technology
<http://www.chalmers.se/en/Pages/default.aspx>

Swedish Transport Agency
<https://www.transportstyrelsen.se/en/>

Statistics given to us during the visit: these statistics are from the Swedish Transport Agency and are from their Maritime Safety Overview for 2012. They essentially update the figures earlier provided and included in our final report from the project.