



FISH TRACEABILITY MEETS CREATIVE ARTS

The Faroe Islands Trade Council helps to launch ventures ranging from digital traceability of seafood to creative arts and crafts—yet its task of promoting Faroese exports and assisting foreign companies connect with Faroese businesses remains vital as ever.

INCREASINGLY over the last twenty-five years, the Faroe Islands Trade Council has played a profound role in the promotion of Faroese exports and the development of Faroese businesses. Led by the ever-young managing director Kjartan Kristiansen, the lean government agency's ability to change with the times has been proven beyond doubt—and highlighted in some of its recent successes.

The Trade Council's work to coordinate joint Faroese participation on international trade shows—such as the annual European Seafood Exposition in Brussels—has for many Faroese compa-

nies become an essential part of their efforts in export marketing and customer relations.

Meanwhile, a growing number of fact finding missions and joint business delegations to various countries is generating new business opportunities every year—and that's not mentioning



the Trade Council's daily business activities which include answering queries, informing, planning events and operating a website containing an Export Directory, a presentation of the Faroe business environment, and more.

Business development advice is nonetheless a priority, not least highlighted by the recent establishment of Faroese Traceability System (Föroya Sporförisskipan), a joint venture between the Association of Faroese Fish Producers (Föroya Ráfiskaseljarafelag) and the Association of Faroese Seafood Processors (Föroya Ráfiskakeyparafelag) with the main task of setting up a unique,

Trade Council managing director Kjartan Kristiansen (center); singer, artist Eivør Pálsdóttir, a rising international star from the Faroese music scene (right).

digital platform for chain traceability in the fishing industry.

Before the company was formed, the DNTS (Digital National Traceability System) was run by Bitland as a research and development project backed by the Trade Council in conjunction with the industry and the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Affairs. Said Mr Kristiansen: "We supported the project by lending out our business adviser Steinbjörn í Dali to act as project manager. After all, Bitland and the Trade Council share common goals when it comes to developing information and communication technology for business."

Another project named 'Rhythmic Music in the Faroes' has apparently been a rampant success although somewhat less tangible than the development of any particular business solution. "It's different with projects like Rhythmic Music in the Faroes," Mr Kristiansen added. "Perhaps the management report wasn't read by everyone... But the project in itself and the events and the consultations that were held, and all the musicians that participated in the project made it a success—it helped galvanize incredible development on the contemporary music scene in the Faroes with increasing visibility and breakthroughs abroad."

Bolstered by successful ventures of Faroese clothing designers in recent years, another focus of business development is turned on creative arts and crafts—and featuring a trip to London. "Faroese designers are experiencing success on international markets and this is giving rise to new opportunities," Mr Kristiansen said. "The Trade Council is



involved in organizing an event called 'Creative London' the idea chiefly being to highlight current trends in creative arts and crafts."

At the other end of the spectrum, indications are Faroese are increasingly participating in international scientific research—another area in which the Trade Council seeks to play a supporting part. "Traditionally, people in the Faroes and the Faroese fishing industry have an enormous amount of technical knowledge relevant to fish harvesting and processing. Unfortunately, we haven't been very good at structuring this knowledge or commercializing it. On the other hand, we've been sharing it and giving it away to others for free, concentrating our own efforts on using the knowledge on a practical level and for practical solutions."

Meanwhile, the Trade Council's visionary concept of several years ago, known as the 'North Atlantic Resource Centre' is set to get back on track, albeit in a slightly different setting than originally planned. "We're going to use this concept again to highlight the Faroes—this summer in St. Petersburg; because we have a lot of resources to offer Russian vessels that enter Faroese waters."

Trade Council business adviser Steinbjörn í Dali (right); the Faroese were awarded the 'Best National Booth' prize at the Icelandic Fisheries Exhibition 2005 (left).

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Information services for foreign business contacts including comprehensive, web-based Export Directory and information on Faroe Islands Business Environment.

Information on the fishing industry, marine environment, and more: <http://www.fishin.fo>

As to oil and gas exploration, the Trade Council has likewise participated in international trade shows notably the biannual Offshore Europe in Aberdeen and ONS in Stavanger, the latter to be held this year. "As a result of the international interest in the Faroese Continental Shelf, we do have a Faroese petroleum industry today, although it's still very small... Well, some of our young people are pursuing education in the oil industry... and the Trade Council has since 1995 organized Faroese participation at these events in Scotland and Norway; we'll be in Stavanger this year, too."

