

WORK PROGRAMME FOR LDAC Y17

Period: 01/06/2023 to 31/05/2024

Background

Legislative framework

The role and functioning of the Advisory Councils (ACs) is defined in the CFP Regulation (UE) No 1380/2013¹, namely articles 43-45 and Annex III. The ACs are also bound by the specific Delegated Regulations (EU) 2015/242, 2017/1575 and 2022/224, laying down detailed rules on their functioning under the Common Fisheries Policy. Furthermore, Advisory Councils are recognized as organizations aiming a European interest and they are beneficiaries of co-funding by the European Commission in accordance with recital 28 and article 48(d) of the (EU) Regulation 2021/1139 on the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund.

The **Long-Distance Advisory Council (LDAC)** is an EU fisheries stakeholder-led body that provides evidence-based advice to the European Commission and the Member States in relation to conservation and management of fishing resources outside EU waters. According to Annex III of the CFP Regulation, its area of competence and geographical remit is all non-EU waters including both the EEZ of third countries and the high seas.

The LDAC was formally established in 2007 and has been in full operational since 31 May of that year without any interruptions.

In terms of composition and membership, the LDAC is currently made up by 54 member organisations from 11 EU coastal Member States². It has a 60:40 composition of fishing sector organisations (including catching, processing and marketing sectors, and trade unions), and other groups of interest (representatives of the civil society and environmental and cooperation for development NGOs), respectively. In the Executive Committee, there are currently 15 seats in the fishing sector and 8 seats on the NGOs sector (with 2 vacancies).

It is worthy to note that the LDAC was the first AC in suggesting to DG MARE the idea of carrying out regular independent performance reviews of the ACs. A formal proposal was presented in the Inter-AC meeting held in November 2017. Subsequently, the LDAC pursued this goal and carried out under its own initiative a comprehensive independent performance review commissioned to an external consultant. This review was undertaken over the course of two financial years (Y12 and Y13).

The outcomes of this review can be found in two dedicated reports available in the LDAC website:

- LDAC Strategic Report No 1 Performance Review 2016-2018 - *Organisation and functioning of Working Groups; decision-making process and quality considerations linked to production of advice:*
https://ldac.eu/images/LDAC_web-compressed_Performance_Review.pdf
- LDAC Strategic Report No 2 Performance Review 2017-2019 - *International Cooperation Practices; Communication Outreach and Strategy; Gender Issues:*
https://ldac.eu/images/FINAL_PerformanceReview_II_v5.2_compressed_26_05_2020.pdf

The LDAC is committed to follow up with this exercise in Y18 (i.e., 2024), which is 5 years as indicated in article 7a of the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/204, of 8 December 2021.

¹ Amended by the Regulation (EU) 2017/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2017.

² Since year 14, UK is not a member of the LDAC due to the Brexit.

Transparency initiatives

The LDAC is fully transparent for reporting of its financial contributions and activities with a summary of their annual accounts and presentations of financial reporting available in the LDAC website. The full accounts are also available to those members who wish to request it in writing.

The LDAC is actively registered on the EU Transparency Register of organizations (last update: 24 January 2023) with ID No. 905805219213-67:

<http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/consultation/displaylobbyist.do?id=905805219213-67>

It is also included on the UIA Annual Yearbook of International Organizations: <http://www.uia.org/yearbook>

Mission and objectives of the LDAC

The **LDAC's mission** is to promote the conservation of marine biodiversity and the sustainable use and management of fisheries resources outside EU waters by providing recommendations on the effective implementation of the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy.

To achieve this mission, it holds substantial discussions in the drafting and preparation of letters and advice with the aim to provide sensible and pragmatic recommendations to achieve sustainability from the three pillars laid out in the CFP, i.e., from an environmental, economic and social perspective. It also seeks to collect data which serves to underpin technical evidence to feed EU consultations, achieve a level playing field and improve the economic competitiveness and performance of EU's Member States fleets *vis-à-vis* non-EU fleets.

As in previous years, the LDAC is committed to continue providing the European Commission and Member States with timely, evidence-based, technical advice, either in response to specific consultations and requests or under its own initiative or in response to consultations and requests

In terms of **objectives**, the LDAC aims to assist the European Commission and Member States to:

1. Promoting coherence between the internal and external dimension of the CFP, in relation to objectives established by the EU under the EU Green Deal and more recently its fisheries policy legislative package adopted on 21 February 2023ⁱ. In particular, it will look how to improve implementation of the External Dimension in the Communication on the functioning of the common fisheries policy today and tomorrow and how to support the Fisheries and Oceans Pact towards sustainable, science-based, innovative and inclusive fisheries management. And it will explore linkages between the marine action plan on protecting and restoring marine ecosystem for sustainable and resilient fisheries and its application within the remit of international ocean governance agenda (e.g. with CBD, BBNJ Treaty and ISA Mining Code).
2. The LDAC will also look for policy coherence between fisheries, environment, trade, labour, health and sustainable development, to ensure EU policies impacts promote the sustainability of external fisheries: <https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/policy-coherence-development>
3. Ensuring effective implementation of the EU Fisheries Control system and in particular the fight against IUU fishing, control of imports and transparency of fishing activities of the external fishing fleet (SMEFF Regulation).
4. Promoting the implementation of the social dimension of the CFP including decent labour conditions at sea and in land and social sustainability in fisheries value chains

5. Monitoring involvement and participation of the European Union in contributing to a better international ocean governance (IOG) through effective implementation of its agenda 2030 through sustainable fisheries policies and promotion of dialogue with third countries, in line with one of the six Headline Ambitions and Priorities set by the European Commission “*making a Europe stronger in the world*”³.
6. Providing advice to remove barriers to transparency, accountability and dialogues with coastal states stakeholders, in particular for the implementation of SFPAs. The reference of “removing barriers to transparency” is linked to the dedicated section of the LDAC advice submitted in 2020⁴, under the section “Governance/transparency”:
7. Highlight the role, visibility and importance of local artisanal fishing communities of non-EU countries for socio-economic sustainability of fishing value chains, food security and poverty alleviation.
8. Participating in EC technical meetings in preparation of Annual and Intersessional Meetings of relevant RFMOs (NAFO, ICCAT, IATTC, IOTC, WPFC...) as well as attending those RFMO annual meetings where the LDAC has issued an advice, in member capacity within the EU delegation.
9. Representing the voice of EU fisheries stakeholders in international fora related to sustainable fisheries and related human activities at sea having an impact on fisheries, whenever possible and provided there is a clear mandate from the LDAC members and subject to prior consent of DG MARE (e.g., UNGA, FAO, CBD, CITES, ISA...).
10. Helping to gather information and initiatives from fishing operators and other interest groups (OIG) which might be useful to the achievement of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in particular Sustainable Development Goal 14 on “Life below Water”.

LDAC WORK PRIORITIES

Overarching long term and short-term work priorities (at least 3 priorities)

The LDAC aims to work proactively on contributing to the promotion of sustainable, healthy and profitable fisheries around the world and to achieve a level playing field in terms of environmental, social and economic sustainability standards between EU and non-EU fleets, as an engine of change.

In order to establish and coordinate short and medium/long term priorities, the LDAC will try to align its work with that of the European Commission through regular (in person or virtual) coordination meetings with DG MARE.

In Year 17, the LDAC intends to provide evidence-based advice to the EC in the field of the external dimension of the CFP.

³ Von der Leyen paper titled “*My vision for Europe - Political Guidelines for the next EC 2019-2026*”:
https://www.eunec.eu/sites/www.eunec.eu/files/attachment/files/political-guidelines-next-commission_en_kopie.pdf
EC priorities for 2019-2026: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world_en

⁴ https://ldac.eu/images/LDAC_Advice_on_improving_SFPAs_evaluationsR.13.20.WG4.pdf

As a result, NINE (9) work priorities have been identified as key deliverable indicators (KDI) for assessment:

1. International Ocean Governance

The LDAC has actively contributed to the three editions of the IOG forums in 2020 and 2021⁵, and the public consultation launched by DG MARE, culminating in the adoption on June 2022 of the European Commission and the EU's High Representative joint communication on IOG agenda as an integral part of the EU's implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for SDG, SDG14 on Life Below Water. The LDAC will seek to provide elements for making into action the recommendations made on the blue part of the European Green Deal, including impact of climate change and reverse biodiversity loss. Looking at the four policy pillars articulated to integrate actions for a safe, secure, clean, healthy and sustainably managed ocean, the LDAC will focus particularly on pillar 1. Strengthening the IOG framework, and pillar 3. Ensuring security and safety at sea.

Furthermore, it will provide stakeholders' views (either formal or informal) prior to key negotiations taking place in the context of RFMOs and relevant UN processes such as the UNGA resolution on sustainable fisheries, or the outcomes of the UNFSA Resumed Review Conference held on 22-26 May 2023⁶FA. Finally, it will follow other global processes with linkages between environmental conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, including sustainable fisheries management (CBD , BBNJ, ISA Council).

2. Promotion of Level playing field of fishing products between EU and non EU operators and traders to ensure the environmental and social sustainability of products in EU market

The LDAC has been working since 2020 in developing a comprehensive and fully-fledged position paper identifying areas of uneven internal (intra EU between EU products) and external (between EU and imported products) dimension in the field of fisheries with regards to different aspects related to access to fair competition, traceability of products and value chains, transparency of fishing activities and access to EU market. This work has been complementary of that initiated by the Market Advisory Council and looks specifically at aspects broader than but interlinked to trade such as international governance and policy frameworks, implementation of SFPAs, provisions of RFMOs, fight against IUU fishing, fisheries subsidies and labour, social and human rights. A comprehensive position paper was adopted in May 2021 and that continues to be the current roadmap where the LDAC has identified those areas where there is uneven internal (within the EU) and/or external (EU vis a vis third countries) level playing field.

In Year 17, the LDAC will pursue to engage in active dialogue with DG MARE, DG TRADE and DG EMPL on this subject. Consideration will be also given then to develop a few theme-specific advice in relation to some of the above-mentioned topics.

3. Social Dimension of the CFP

The LDAC will remain active in Year 17 in the promotion of labour and social issues related to fisheries in the EU agenda, including initiatives to contribute to the European Year of Skills in relation to lifelong learning, empowering organization members (individually and as companies) to contribute to the green and digital transitions, supporting innovation and competitiveness.

⁵ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/frontpage/1469>

⁶ https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/review_conf_fish_stocks.htm

The LDAC will continue working with the EU Social Dialogue Committee to implement the agreed road map updated with specific deliverables and actions for 2023 and beyond. The overall aim is to request the European Commission to actively promote a harmonized and robust legal framework within the EU and before relevant international for a in line with internationally agreed social and labour standards for fisheries – this might feed into the consultation process to the report on the CFP revision. The LDAC will:

- 3.1. Request EU flag Member States to foster the adoption, transposition, ratification and effective implementation of key international legal instruments of maritime safety at sea such as ILO C188, or IMO Cape Town Agreement. The LDAC will engage into dialogue with MARE to assist if requested in the shaping of a Directive that will transpose into EU legislation the provisions of IMO International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel (STCW-F), 1995 so it can achieve a minimum level of harmonization between MS.
- 3.2. Formulate specific recommendations on how to improve definition of decent working and living conditions of fish workers along external fisheries value chains, formulating recommendations on some of the following areas (to be agreed within WG5): fair remuneration (minimum salary, pay slips...); adequate training related to work functions and maritime safety; employment rights and non-discrimination of local crews and migrant workers vis-à-vis EU nationals (e.g. rest times, social security benefits...); exploring a framework for collective bargaining agreements, or medical inspections; improving women in fisheries working conditions in partner countries.
- 3.3. In the international arena, the LDAC will also look at ongoing FAO initiative to raise awareness on the need to promote social responsibility in the fisheries value chains around the world. The LDAC is registered as collaborating organization and has two designated representatives in the figures of the Chair and the Secretariat. During Year 16, it has provided input and comments both via stakeholder meeting (1 December 2022) and a virtual platform (March 2023) to shape the text of the first section of the FAO Guidance Document on “Industrial Fishing”. In Year 17, it will continue contributing to the subsequent versions of the draft of this and other technical Annexes (e.g., post-harvesting sector) by following the FAO process. This could also serve to inform EU and MS on forthcoming FAO Sub-Committees on Fisheries Trade⁷.

4. Evaluation of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) with Third Countries.

The LDAC has participated in 2021 both to the roadmap and the EU public and targeted consultations launched by DG MARE to provide a critical overview of the constituent elements of SFPAs and formulate recommendations regarding both the process and content of this overall evaluation, to make the whole exercise more efficient.⁸ On 2 February 2023, the LDAC co-sponsored with DG MARE a side event in HALIEUTIS show to discuss practical aspects of implementation of SFPAs in African partner countries. This consisted in a round panel of experts from DG MARE, representatives of EU industrial and African artisanal fleets, trade unions and environmental NGOs to exchange views on how to improve existing scientific knowledge, implementation of social clause, transparency clause, and optimization of use of sectoral support, amongst others.

⁷ Link to report of COFI 34 Session – see recommendation 39:

https://ldac.eu/images/COFI_34_Draft_Report_for_Adoption_en.pdf

⁸ The LDAC contribution can be found here: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12728-Fisheries-evaluation-of-the-EU-s-sustainable-fisheries-partnership-agreements-SFPAs->

In year 17, the LDAC is committed to provide ongoing feedback to DG MARE on the outcomes of the study on retrospective evaluation of SFPAs prepared within the framework of the EU report on the CFP (expected to be launched in 2023). The LDAC will invite DG MARE unit to provide an update and present the outcomes of the study once available at its Working Group 4. There, it will exchange views on how to optimize implementation of SFPAs in terms of effective implementation of the protocol in terms of fishing activity including quota consumption and cohabitation of EU industrial with other non-EU industrial and artisanal fleets; and improve the efficiency of utilization of funds, allocated to the sectorial support. In relation to the latter, key actions must take place to improve capacity building, training and development of coastal State capacities and local communities from third countries, including artisanal fishers.

In the case of *ex-post* and *ex-ante* evaluations of SFPAs, LDAC will also look at reviewing and monitoring of agreements in force analyzing methodology and content of these evaluations on a case-by-case basis following consultations received by external contractors appointed by the European Commission. It will also provide the Commission with concrete elements to support the identification of priorities linked to the agreement and needs assessment of recipients from third countries (policy makers and stakeholders). It will also reiterate its advice to improve the transparency of implementation of SFPAs through publication of minutes of scientific and joint committees; publication of annual reports on the use of sectorial support; reporting of fishing activities via publication of public and private agreements from EU and non-EU vessels signed with the third country. In addition, LDAC will look at the specific impacts of SFPAs on the marine environment, where partial work has been done via the Far Fish H2020 project⁹, including by-catch and non-targeted species; socio-economic impact; value chain analysis and trade flows.

5. The role of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) in sustainable use of fishing and marine resources

The LDAC will aim to provide in Year 17 timely and strategic input to the EC designated negotiation teams prior to the intersessional panel meetings, special sessions and the plenary annual meetings of key regional fisheries management organizations of high interest for our members.

In this respect, the LDAC will provide input to the EC designated negotiation teams of key regional fisheries management organizations, either in the form of writing input/advice (e.g., NAFO, ICCAT) or by active participate in preparatory technical coordination meetings (IOTC, WPFC...).

Further work will be explored on providing more detailed feedback to proposals related to ecosystem approach to fisheries management in some of these areas, should there be information provided by relevant members both from the fishing sector and other interest groups/NGOs.

6. Review of EU Fisheries Control Systems; and effective implementation of Regulations on Fight against IUU Fishing (IUU) and Sustainable Management of the External Fishing Fleet (SMEFF)

The LDAC will continue working on Year 17 on improving the effective implementation of the IUU and the SMEFF Regulations. With that purpose, shortcomings will be identified and areas to improve from the side of the EU, Member States and fishing operators.

⁹ The LDAC was partner of EU funded H2020 FarFish: <https://www.farfish.eu/> a 4.5-year project which ended on 30 Nov. 2021.

Specific emphasis will be put on using the periodically updated EU database on fishing authorizations to inform our advice, and request measures to improve identification of vessels when required, including compulsory CFR and IMO numbers.

The LDAC will also keep a close eye on the evolution of the review of the EU fisheries control system, currently under triologue discussions within the co-decision procedure, and in particular how new measures will apply to EU vessels fishing outside EU waters, and its corresponding impacts. An important area of work in this new approach will be the transition phase from a paper-based to an electronic implementation of the EU Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS – IT CATCH). The LDAC is also interested at streamlining the current system of mutual assistance between MS for early detection of already rejected or suspicious consignments to avoid fraudulent entry of products in the EU market.

Last, the LDAC will ask for regular briefings and update from DG MARE IUU unit at WG5 meetings on the state of play of EU carding system (green, yellow and red cards), and dialogue with countries of interest for LDAC members such as Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Ghana, Cameroon, China, Thailand, Panama or Ecuador, amongst others.

In continuation with the work initiated in Y16 and based on such information added to LDAC stakeholders' information, the LDAC will envisage to produce a series of recommendations and advice on individual country level highlighting shortcomings and deficiencies and proposing remedial actions and measures to overcome them. The LDAC has already issued in December 2022 a comprehensive piece of advice jointly with the MAC addressing China's distant water fleet activities and its implications in the global fisheries governance. This piece of advice analysed the global footprint of the Chinese distant water fleet and its role, expansion and impact in world fisheries. It formulated a series of recommendations on transparency, capacity building, fight against IUU fishing, SFPAs, public subsidies, trade and social rights and development for cooperation.

The LDAC is also working on a piece of advice on EU work cooperation with Morocco to improve fisheries governance and resilient fishing communities. This will look at existing relationships and in particular implementation of SFPAs to expire on July 2023, challenges to fisheries governance and maritime security, social and labour dimension and cooperation in the fight against IUU.

7. Climate change and impacts on fisheries

The LDAC members have shown increased concern over the last years with the specific impacts of climate change might affect to the marine environment, and to highly migratory stocks and its impact on international fisheries management in the high seas and subsequent affectation to activities and economic performance of EU distant water fleet. A specific area of focus will be the Northeast Atlantic mixed fisheries, where there are changes in migration patterns of both big and small pelagic stocks moving north and west. This is having already implications in terms of fisheries governance in the area, with multilateral negotiations on allocation of fishing opportunities with third countries such as UK, Norway, Iceland, Faroe or Russia. Another area of interest case will be that of changes in biological productivity (number of individuals, weight and size) of highly migratory stocks such as tropical tuna and changes in route migrations for small and big pelagic in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans affecting catch for coastal countries fishing communities and distant water fleets operating in beneficiary countries of SFPAs.

The LDAC is planning to organise on 25 May 2023 in Stockholm a dedicated workshop on this matter, with speakers from academia, FAO, DG MARE, scientific community, EU industrial and artisanal fishing industry representatives from partner countries, and NGOs.

In terms of bibliographic reference, the LDAC will consider the conclusions of the IPCC Assessment Reports on Climate Change¹⁰ as well as the FAO technical paper on impacts of climate change for fisheries and aquaculture published in 2018¹¹ and several EU funded projects such as CERES or FutureMARES¹².

In view of the above, the LDAC will consider, either on its own or via cooperation with other ACs, developing some advice to look at this matter also considering recent EU debate on energy efficiency and decarbonization which is one of the priorities of the EU and the Spanish Presidency of the EU taking place in the second half of 2023 (focusing on alternative energy sources including biodiesels and engine modifications).

8. Role of artisanal fisheries from non-EU coastal states in fisheries

The LDAC will continue investigating in Year 17 how the External Dimension of the CFP can contribute to support development of fishing communities in Africa. This can be materialised with three specific actions:

- 8.1. Organise side events in international meetings to underpin and develop some of the actions agreed during the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA)¹³ and the UN Lisbon Ocean Conference¹⁴. One could be a high-level seminar or workshop on the implementation, benefits and challenges linked to implementation of SFPAs for coastal communities (including themes such as good practices in co-habitation and exclusive access to certain coastal zones, use of sectoral support, inclusiveness of stakeholders in ex ante and ex post evaluations of SFPAs, etc.).
- 8.2. Develop with external strategic partners (COMHAFAT, AFRIFISH-Net, IOC) specific initiatives to support innovation and creation of value addition in African Artisanal Fisheries Value Chain Develop with (e.g., access to raw materials for local women fish processors, R&I to improve techniques for smoking and processing of pelagic fish, etc.).
- 8.3. Protect fisheries from other competing maritime economic sectors present in the blue economy. Promote a precautionary approach for the development of new blue economy activities that impact fisheries in line with multi-AC advice on the roadmap for a Maritime sector – a green post-COVID future submitted on December 2020:
https://ldac.eu/images/EN_Multi-AC_advice_Blue_Economy_09Dec2020.pdf
- 8.4. The LDAC will look in particular of the “Blue Transformation”¹⁵ concept of FAO in this regard, presenting a vision to expand aquatic food systems and increase their contribution to nutritious and affordable healthy diets for the most vulnerable, while fostering equitable growth, especially for those communities that depends on fisheries and aquaculture.

¹⁰ <https://www.ipcc.ch/>

¹¹ <https://www.fao.org/policy-support/tools-and-publications/resources-details/es/c/1152846/>

¹² INSERT LINK TO THE LDAC WORKSHOP PAGE ONCE CREATED

¹³ The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2022 the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA 2022). FAO is the lead agency for celebrating the year in collaboration with other relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system.

¹⁴ <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/ocean2022>

¹⁵ <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/es/c/cc0458en/>

It recognises the importance of aquatic food systems as drivers of employment, economic growth, social development and environment recovery, which all underpin the UN SDGs and recognizes the need to support the UN 2030 Agenda.

- 8.5. In September 2015, the LDAC held an International Conference on the External Dimension of the CFP¹⁶ in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. One of the recommendations agreed was to highlight the importance of the socio-economic impact of fisheries investments in African coastal countries¹⁷.

The LDAC has been working since then in several informal actions to improve socio-economic data and knowledge about EU owned businesses and companies operating in third countries under joint ventures or analogue schemes. For Year 17, in order to strengthen visibility and recognition of contribution of EU fishing investments in third countries for development of coastal communities in third countries – the LDAC is planning to organize a workshop in the second half of 2023 with governmental authorities, scientists, stakeholders, EU fishing industry representatives and SSF groups from third countries, under the Spanish presidency of the EU, aimed to present case studies with particular emphasis in West Africa and develop recommendations based on a SWAT analysis and develop a guide of good practices for responsible and sustainable business that can be further implemented voluntarily as a and perhaps taken by FAO, the EP or a similar body.

¹⁶ <http://ldac.eu/en/meetings/ldac-international-conference>

¹⁷ Recommendation 1.5 “*European investors in the fisheries industry in third countries (joint ventures) must be included and recognised by the CFP. The EU must promote a dialogue with African countries that fosters the development of a regulatory framework for joint venture with respect to catch (applicable to all vessels of foreign origin), processing and marketing that guarantees that joint ventures operate transparently, do not compete with artisanal fishing and contribute to the development objectives of the country in question*”
https://ldac.eu/images/documents/events/2015/EN_FINAL_RECOMMENDATIONS_CONFERENCE_LDAC_ED_CFP.pdf

Work priorities identified for each Working Group and Focus Group (where available)

Working Group 1: Highly migratory fish stocks (Tuna and Tuna-like species)

- Horizontal issues within the context of RFMOs:

The WG1 will consider working on an advice to DG MARE on the access allocation process and fair ways to address development aspirations of developing countries simultaneously to the respects of EU investments in sustainable tropical tuna fisheries operations. As there can be a link with SFPA (which provide sectorial help and defines technical conditions for access), the subject might be discussed in a joint horizontal WG1-WG4 Focus Group.

More emphasis will be put on the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries in the context of tuna RFMOs, with specific emphasis on by-catch of key commercial species.

- International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT):

The Secretariat and/or key members will attend either in person or virtually (if feasible) the PA1 (tropical tuna) and PA4 (sharks) inter sessional meetings and workshops to follow the deliberation process amongst CPCs and scientists. The LDAC will be keen to provide feedback to the Commission ahead of the Intersessional meetings and participate at the Commission's meeting with stakeholders expected to happen in fall 2022 in preparation of next ICCAT Annual Meeting planned for November 2023. As in previous years, a dedicated focus group will be set up with a balanced composition of fishing operators from different fleets and gears (purse seiners, long liners, pole and line...) and NGO members.

The aspiration will be to produce an advice focused on Atlantic stocks of commercial interest, in particular tropical tunas (with specific concerns on bigeye tuna) and sharks including blue shark and northern Atlantic shortfin mako. In respect to the latter, the LDAC Secretariat endeavours to collect technical information on the EU longline fleet representatives from Spain and Portugal on the voluntary spatial measures they set in place to avoid catches significantly, namely spatial-seasonal closed areas and good handling practices via release of alive specimens. Furthermore, qualitative information will be asked on by-catch issues in line with the environmental based approach to fisheries.

Last, it will seek to coordinate with other concerned ACs with interest in ICCAT (MEDAC, CC-Sud, CCRUP), insofar as possible, to be able to present common positions on certain stocks or fisheries in the near future. An example of this coordination is explained in the section below of Inter-AC collaboration.

- Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC):

The LDAC will provide formal (in writing) or informal (via technical coordination meetings with MARE) feedback and aim to submit specific recommendations to the ongoing negotiations and inform the proposals tabled by the EU on fishing allocations and conservation and management measures (including FADs) for tropical tuna stocks with specific focus on Yellowfin and Skipjack tunas. Upon request from DG MARE or its members, the LDAC will also provide advice on items related to monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing activities and regional observer programmes, as well as data reporting issues.

A dedicated virtual Focus Group on IOTC is operative since Year 14 and will continue its work in Year 17 to follow up decision on conservation and management measures adopted at the IOTC Annual Meeting (May 2023) for all gears targeting yellowfin tuna and associated tropical tuna stocks.

During Year 17, it can be expected that dedicated work will be spent in formulating advice on a controversial measure proposing a de facto ban on drifting fishing aggregating devices (FADs) to help rebuilding the yellowfin tuna stock, agreed at the IOTC Special Session held on February 2023 in Kenya by 16 votes out of 30. This proposal has already been objected to date by several contracting parties including the proponent Kenya, Oman, Comoros, Somalia, and Seychelles. In parallel, several of the proponent countries, including Iran, India,

Somalia, Indonesia, Madagascar and Pakistan objected a plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC area of competence.

Due to the difficult situation of IOTC, the LDAC will formulate recommendations for the EU to reinforce collaboration with other countries and foster multilateralism and cooperation in good faith between coastal states and fishing nations as stated in UNFSA and ensuring proper functioning of this RFMO.

Last, the topic on introducing recommendations on measures to fight against IUU fishing will be also considered for inclusion within the remit of this Focus Group in collaboration with WG5, with topics such as non-declared C, catches or use of large pelagic driftnets.

- Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC):

The LDAC adopted its first written advice in November 2022 in preparation of the 19th regular session of the WCPFC Commission. Its advice provided recommendations on: development and implementation harvest strategies, including precautionary reference points and harvest control rules; southwest Pacific swordfish; labour standards and observers' safety at sea; electronic monitoring; monitoring of transshipments at sea; FAD management; conservation and management of sharks and rays.

In Year 17, the LDAC will aim to continue providing feedback to the DG MARE negotiation team through dedicated coordination meetings and exchange of views at WG1 meetings ahead of next annual meeting of WCPFC in November 2023.

- Partnerships with organisations working in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans:

The LDAC will seek consolidating and expanding its network of partners outside the EU through the promotion of the initiatives in the field of transparency of fishing activities and projects of research and collaboration for improving responsibility of EU distant water fleets and investments in third countries and contributing to development for cooperation of coastal communities in third countries.

The LDAC has a MoU signed with the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation amongst African Coastal States in the Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO-COMHAFAT) since 2013 and is still active and in force. The LDAC Secretariat will liaise with its partner in West Africa COMHAFAT to facilitate dialogue with the EU to develop common or joint proposals to be presented or supported at ICCAT Special Annual Meeting; it will also look at recommendations on existing CMM related to Fish Aggregated Devices (FADs) in the Atlantic fisheries of Africa (both in the high seas and EEZ of coastal states) and keep working in finding a suitable administrative, financial and operational framework allowing for the future creation of an RFMO dealing with regional management of demersal and small pelagic stocks in West Africa.

The LDAC has been also agreed a new MoU in the first quarter of 2023 with the Fisheries Division of FAO, the Pan-African platform of Non-State Actors in Fisheries and Aquaculture (AFRIFISH) within the framework of African Union. The MoU has been officially signed on 25 May 2023 by the Chairs and Secretaries of both organisations during the GA and ExCom meetings held in Stockholm.

Last, the LDAC will resume contacts with the Indian Ocean Commission in Year 17 to investigate avenues for collaboration within the framework of ECOFISH programme.

Working Group 2: North Atlantic Fisheries Agreement and RFMOs

- Northern Fisheries Bilateral Agreements incl. UK, Norway, Iceland, Faroe Islands and Greenland:

The LDAC wishes to invite in Year 17 the negotiating team of DG MARE to forthcoming WG2 meetings to be informed on the content of the EU proposal and the state of play of the negotiations with the above referred countries in the Northeast Atlantic. Based on feedback from members, it might consider providing ongoing feedback on the particularities of each of the agreement above mentioned including considerations such as annual fishing opportunities and utilization of the quotas assigned, technical and commercial measures, monitoring of EEA negotiations or, for the specific case of relations with Norway, fishing regime access to Svalbard Fisheries Protection Zone and the ongoing conflict on Arctic Cod and Snow Crab stocks.

Furthermore, the framework agreement between EU and Norway is under revision in 2023 but has still not been concluded to date. The LDAC WG2 will be prepared to provide stakeholders advice to DG MARE on this subject upon DG MARE request.

- Implementation of EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement between EU and UK:

The LDAC will also continue liaising with other concerned ACs (namely PELAC, NSAC, NWWAC and MAC)) within the structure of an Inter-AC Brexit Focus Group Forum aimed to formulate recommendations on the role and participation of EU fisheries stakeholders in the Specialized Committee on Fisheries (SCF) as a result of the implementation of the EU and UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA):

https://ec.europa.eu/info/relations-united-kingdom/eu-uk-trade-and-cooperation-agreement_en

Following rotation practices amongst ACs, the LDAC has acted as host/organizer of at two of the Inter-AC periodic Joint Focus Group during year 16. This new system of work might require in Year 17 internal adjustments or adaptive ways of providing stakeholders' advice in coordination with other ACs vis-à-vis the concerned unit in DG MARE working in the context of bilateral EU-UK and/or trilateral EU-UK-Norway negotiations on fishing opportunities in 2024 and long-term review of fishing opportunities and allocation keys.

- North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC):

The LDAC will rely on the DG MARE correspondent unit and its own industry members to be informed on updated information from NEAFC Coastal States consultations. It will also provide advice on issues other than fishing opportunities and it will exchange views with ICES (through participation in MIACO and other relevant fora) on how to improve knowledge on ecosystem approach (e.g., VMEs and OECMs) and improve biology and management of demersal and deep-sea stocks in this Regulatory Area. Last, the LDAC is currently working with the PELAC in developing a joint initiative to discuss possible scenarios for the creation of a dedicated stakeholders' forum in the international waters of the NEA. This is a theoretical exercise trying to identify structures to channel and organize EU fisheries stakeholders' participation in NEAFC, whose progress will depend very much on the will of the Management Teams/members.

- Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO):

Similarly, as in previous years, the LDAC will setup a dedicated task force or focus group to develop a fully-fledged advice to be presented in oral form at the EC technical meeting with stakeholders in August 2023 and in written form the adopted advice at least one week before the NAFO Annual Meeting planned for the third week of September 2023 in Galicia (Spain).

Working Group 3: International waters and other RFMOs

This Working Group was formally removed in Year 13 as a result of the retirement of its Chair, the resignation of its Vice Chair and the lack of interest expressed by the members of the Executive Committee in keeping this meeting with very low attendance (less than 12 individuals in average) and lack of active participation. However, the topics dealt with there have not been entirely discarded. Those who are still of interest (e.g., Atlantic South West, and role of fishing investments in third countries) have been reallocated between Working Group 5 and the Executive Committee. To this date, the number of the subsequent working groups have not been changed at this stage, so we have four working groups: WG1, WG2, WG4 and WG5.

Working Group 4: Bilateral relations and Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) between the EU and third countries

- The LDAC will invite DG MARE at forthcoming meetings in Year 17 and follow the progress on negotiation of new SFPAs, renewal of existing ones and implementation of those currently in force. The LDAC will consider developing advice on specific countries should they be requested from the members. For Y17, it is envisaged that special consideration will be given to the following countries: Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal, Bissau, Gabon and Seychelles.
- The LDAC will endeavour to assess and advice on specific technical elements and aspects of the SFPAs, gathering information from operators and other interest groups on their concerns regarding problems with the implementation of the licensing system, technical measures (seasonal closures, zoning, allocation of fishing effort...) or quota (infra/over utilization and consumption) for certain technical modalities, as well as the use of sectoral support and promotion of EU environmental and social sustainability standards.
- In continuation to the work of Years 15 and 16, the LDAC will look at how to improve the implementation of social clause in SFPAs as well as the implementation of ILO Conventions for partner countries seafarers employment conditions (including salary conditions), providing equivalent level of protections to third country workers and the cooperation on training on safety standards.
- The LDAC will continue giving feedback in any forthcoming EU consultations or questions addressed by DG MARE on the evaluation process of the SFPAs building on the contribution submitted in relation to the public consultation in 2021:
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12728-Fisheries-evaluation-of-the-EU-s-sustainable-fisheries-partnership-agreements-SFPAs->
- The LDAC will aim at providing an integrated approach and vision of the industry and NGOs on a number of topics related to beneficiary countries of SFPAs in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean, namely:
 - o Proposals on technical requirements, financial and administration conditions for creation of new RFMO for West African small pelagic and demersal species, with the possibility of upgrading the status of CECAF: organigramme, governance, structure, role and functions of all parties including stakeholder's participation. This analysis will be based on two technical studies commissioned and published by COMHAFAT and DG MARE in 2020 and early 2021, respectively.
 - o Role of fishing agents in third countries – reflect and showcase good and bad practices on labour conditions (e.g., remuneration, registration into Social Security schemes, repatriation, insurance, etc.) for African crew members onboard EU and non-EU fishing vessels; as well as the influence

and role of fishing agents with examples of third countries such as Senegal or Ivory Coast. A dedicated Focus Group will be convened on this topic to develop a draft using as reference the ITF/ETF report to be published in 2023.

- Request for more transparency and good governance of SFPAs in third coastal countries through effective implementation of the transparency clause via better access to information and performance of public and private fishing agreements with long distance fleets.
- The annual coordination meeting between LDAC and ATLAFCO-COMHAFAT will be organised this time in the second half of 2023. The LDAC will explore with COMHAFAT if there are possibilities for implementation of regional programmes for scientific observers at sea onboard EU fishing vessels in African EEZs as well as harmonised control schemes at African ports. The possibility of developing a joint approach on how to improve capacity building and resources to carry out both initiatives will be contemplated with possibility of asking for financial aid via sectoral support and/or EU funded trade and cooperation projects to improve infrastructures, working and living conditions of local fishing communities and have a better image of the positive impact of EU fleets in those countries.

Working Group 5: Horizontal matters

- Level Playing Field (LPF) in the production, processing and commercialisation of fishing products amongst EU and non-EU operators.

This action will be dealt with on a topic-based approach building on the constituent elements indicated in the LDAC advice submitted in 2021 on this subject: https://ldac.eu/images/EN_LDAC_Advice_LP_F_25May2021.pdf

- International Ocean Governance

The LDAC will liaise with DG MARE to be informed periodically on the IOG process and meetings calendar for 2023-2024. In particular, the LDAC is committed to be actively engaged in the shaping and implementation of the IOG agenda adopted in June 2022. It will also follow up implementation of the outcomes highlighted in the DG summary report on the outcomes of the IOG consultation (published in February 2021) and aim to participate in technical preparatory meetings with DG MARE in relation to the following topics:

- Ratification and negotiations at UN COP level for the implementation of the BBNJ Treaty adopted at the Resumed IGC held in New York on February-March 2023. This is relevant as BBNJ is international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.
- Implementation of UN 2030 Agenda and related UN Ocean Conference (SDGs) – a LDAC delegation was present in Lisbon attending the UN Ocean Conference on implementation of SDG14 (27 June-1 July 2022) and will follow up on the commitments made there.
- UNGA consultations on the Sustainable Fisheries Resolution.
- Labour and social aspects related to fisheries - Social Dimension of CFP and in the international dimension of the EU blue economy and FAO blue transformation.

The LDAC will aim to provide a series of recommendations on the labour and social dimension of fisheries, in particular through compliance of international regulations on maritime safety applicable to fishing activities, as well as respect and observance of social, labour and human rights provisions for crews on board EU and non-EU fishing vessels and fish workers both in third countries and at RFMO level.

The LDAC will continue liaising on this with the European Social Dialogue Committee.

- Implementation of IUU Regulation

The LDAC will invite DG MARE to provide regular updates of their work on implementing the IUU Regulation. The main emphasis will be in providing feedback from operators and NGOs on strengths and weaknesses they found in practice. The LDAC will explore the possibility to develop advice on individual countries subject to the scrutiny of the EU carding system.

- Deepsea mining in the “Area” (high seas)

The LDAC will follow up the work plan for 2023 and the ongoing negotiations for the future adoption of a Regulation for Exploitation and completion of the Mining Code currently taking place at the International Seabed Authority. The LDAC has coordinated and issued recent Joint AC pieces of advice together with other ACs November 2021 and May 2023 on this matter requesting for a precautionary pause on exploitation until further scientific knowledge and evidence are provided:

https://ldac.eu/images/EN_Joint_LDAC_PELAC_NWWAC_Advice_Deepsea_Mining_Nov2021.pdf

The LDAC Secretary will continue monitoring closely this file in Year 17 and act as liaison and coordinator of any further initiatives (either standalone or with other ACs) with the assistance of technical and scientific experts on this matter. The LDAC will liaise with the DG MARE unit and the Fisheries departments of the relevant EU MS upon request to engage in technical preparations ahead of the forthcoming ISA Assembly and Council meetings scheduled for 2023 and 2024.

Further discussions will be held with the DG MARE unit in charge of this file to align timelines and be prepared to inform the EU position if required. This work will be done on the basis that, in accordance with the UNCLOS, the Area and its resources are the common heritage of (hu)mankind; and that the development of an ISA Mining Code must be in line with UNCLOS obligation to ensure effective protection for the marine environment from harmful effects which may arise from activities in the Area (Article 145) and other international standards and commitments on the protection of marine environment, the Precautionary Principle and implementation of EBA in relation to regulation of deep-sea mining.

Other issues of interest if any:

Adjustment to remote working practices and work organization as a result of COVID-19 pandemic

In year 16, the LDAC has held all its meetings in hybrid format to facilitate attendance and participation of members, observers and invited experts, including MARE representatives.

The LDAC Secretariat has tried to keep up the pace of work, including an increase in the number of online focus groups organized on specific themes/issues as indicated in the Annual Work Programme. Besides the ordinary Working Groups, multiple topic-based Focus Groups (estimated between 4-8) will now be called in Year 17 with pre-agreed terms of reference to discuss in depth technical matters with a smaller representation of LDAC members (10-15 representatives of organisations) who are directly concerned or interested and have proven knowledge and expertise on the matter.

The aim of the topic-based Focus Groups will be to produce position papers to be presented for discussion at the plenary sessions of the Working Groups (ordinary procedure) or Executive Committee (fast track procedure) meetings. These papers will integrate all comments made by the relevant experts, including, where necessary, minority or diverging positions.

For year 17, the LDAC staff will keep working with IT multiple language conferencing and meetings software (e.g., Zoom, WebEx, Interactio, VoiceBoxer, MS Teams, Google Meet...) providing simultaneous interpretation services as well as online consultation tools.

Communications Plan and Media

The LDAC will maintain in year 17 a proactive approach regarding media relations by updating and using its Twitter account (@LDAC_eu) and YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@longdistanceadvisorycouncil>). It will also issue press releases to their specialized and general media contacts list, to inform of its meetings and agreed advice produced once submitted to the European Commission.

Also, in year 17, the LDAC will continue sending its bi-monthly e-newsletter called “Fishing Far” to all registered subscribers (open to members, observers and general public). The newsletter contains different sections including “meet our members”, legislation, advice and calendar of meetings, or blog, and relevant information. All the newsletters are uploaded on the LDAC website: <https://ldac.eu/en/medias/newsletters>

Lastly, regarding the sectorial European legislation in fisheries and environment, the LDAC Secretariat will continue submitting weekly updates to its members regularly by email (normally every Friday).

Working practices and relations with DG MARE

Following the recommendations made at the first strategic report of the LDAC performance review, the LDAC will seek to resume a regular contact with the DG MARE coordination team and staff from relevant DG MARE units working with the LDAC to keep them timely informed on pending actions and upcoming advice. This could be either through the usual formal channels (MARE AC) or calling for bilateral coordination meetings (online or presential) with dedicated units for specific topics of interest. The LDAC appreciates greatly the commitment of DG MARE to hold regular Inter AC coordination meetings every 2-3 months with Secretariats for dealing with administrative and financial issues, in particular informing on implementation aspects of the new “lump sum” approach for direct management and funding of the ACs. The increase of frequency (from 1-2 to 4-5 a year) in the Inter AC coordination meetings between DG MARE and the Advisory Councils is also welcome as allow us to be informed regularly and discuss high policy and agenda issues set by DG MARE and be updated on the calendar for future public and targeted consultations.

Lastly, the LDAC highlights one more year the importance of the role of the AC coordination team in DG MARE, as it is essential not only to ensure the attendance of the several EC representatives requested in working groups meetings, but also to channel specific advice requests of highly technical nature and ensure a smooth communication flow with DG MARE officials to channel responses without unnecessary work overload. We always welcome our coordinators from DG MARE to attend at least once a year to our General Assembly and/or Executive Committee meetings held in mid/late May each year to present and/or clarify administrative, budgetary and procedural matters, oversee election procedures and/or assist in informing policy decisions when required.

It was particularly appreciated the revised version of the EC guidelines for the management of EU lump sum grants to Advisory Councils (ACs) submitted on 23 February 2023. The LDAC compiled all comments and questions from 6 ACs Secretariat (i.e., LDAC, MEDAC, NWWAC, PELAC, CCRUP and AAC), while the BSAC and NSAC expressed their support and conformity with the comments made and willingness to engage in discussions in subsequent dialogues. Overall, both the format and the content are clear, and we trust that this will contribute to a smooth implementation of the grant through the lump sum approach together with the ongoing dialogue happening at the Inter AC Secretariat meeting with MARE financial unit.

Work coordination with other Advisory Councils:

- Inter AC cooperation

The Inter AC Secretaries and Chairs annual coordination meeting held in January 2023 identified several cross-cutting policy issues of common interest for many ACs. Considering the new reality arising from travel restrictions and remote work arising from reduced carbon footprint and tele working the LDAC Secretariat will favour its coordination with other ACs via regular virtual meetings.

In this sense, it will adopt an approach on a topic by topic basis to liaise only with those relevant or interested ACs to develop joint papers or positions in topics of shared interest such as development of the work under the TCA between UK and EU and the role of the Specialized Committee on Fisheries (SCF) to provide recommendations to both parties on conservation and management measures for shared stocks as a result of the Brexit process (e.g.

PELAC, NSAC, NWWAC, MAC); ecosystem approach to fisheries management (including impact of human activities such as windmills or deep-sea mining), social and labour dimension of CFP, marine plastics, blue economy, review of fisheries control and fight against IUU fishing, climate change in fisheries MPAs or work with RFMOs, amongst others.

In relation to collaborative work on RFMOs, an informal meeting between Chairs and Secretaries of the LDAC, MEDAC, SWWAC and ORAC was held on 3 March 2023 to exchange views on work priorities for ICCAT (areas and stock covered, main topics of interest...). This meeting served to explore avenues of collaboration aiming to develop joint positions or at least coordinated pieces of advice in the future that can be presented and discussed with DG MARE.

The objectives of the Inter AC collaboration on ICCAT would be to:

- Set up a forum for dialogue (formal/informal) between Chairs, Secretariats and members to coordinate and be aware of each AC work on this area.
- AC Chairs, Secretariats and/or designated members to participate in observer/expert capacity at each relevant AC Working Groups dealing with this subject (and follow up actions and minutes from them).
- Consider creating a joint (in person/hybrid/virtual) AC Focus Group meeting periodically to deal with topics of interest in ICCAT – each AC could rotate in terms of organization (agenda, minutes, actions...).
- Keep each other informed on relevant consultation procedures and content of advice that can be endorsed/signed-off/incorporated in several AC pieces of advice.
- Have a coordinated voice with the DG MARE, in forthcoming technical coordination Inter-AC meetings.

If successful, a similar exercise could be expanded to other RFMOs such as IOTC with CCRUP.

- Market Advisory Council (MAC)

The LDAC Secretary will continue attending the Market Advisory Council Meetings (in particular WGs1 and 2 and Executive Committee) in observer capacity in order to follow the mandate provided by the LDAC members to coordinate and report back on the topics and actions of shared interest from the perspective of the long distance fleet and value chain, e.g., implications of trade partnership agreements and trade related measures to human, and labour rights, control of imports, forced labour or other aspects related to fight against IUU fishing or flags of convenience.

It will also look to continuing collaborating in topics of shared interest such as the review of Fisheries Control systems, social dimension of CFP or impact of Chinese fleets in world fisheries and aquaculture, amongst others.

- Outermost Regions Advisory Council (ORAC-CCRUP)

The LDAC will continue inviting the ORAC-CCRUP key representatives (i.e., Chair, Vice Chairs and Secretary) to regularly attend our meetings and have regular exchanges to coordinate or approach to topics of common interests related to stakeholders' views in preparation of RFMOs such as ICCAT, CECAF or IOTC. At least one LDAC representative (preferably the LDAC Chair or Vice Chairs and/or a member or Secretariat staff) will be present, if possible, in plenary ORAC-CCRUP Working Group, General Assembly and/or Executive Committee meetings in observer capacity, human (time) and financial (budget) resources permitting.

Work initiatives with European and international organisations:

- Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF)

The LDAC Secretary will aim to continue participating at the meetings of the Expert Working Group in 2023 (EWG 23-03 AER-1 and 23-07 AER-2) on the Annual Economic Report of the EU Fishing Fleet for 2023, provided he is invited by the organizers in individual expert capacity based on its work experience of the last five years as coordinator and rapporteur of the regional chapters on the Distant Water Fleets categorized under "Other Fishing Regions". In year 16, he was tasked with drafting partially or fully the sections related to North Atlantic-NAFO, ICCAT, IOTC and CECAF. This work required a review and fine tuning of methodology (performance indicators, percentage of fleet segments coverage and level of detail of geo-indicators provided by MS) and to carry out a

comprehensive EU-MAP data analysis. Also, a qualitative assessment of economic data was carried out to increase coverage of DWF in the report to be more tailored to reality as well as to describe future trends and outlook based on feedback from fleet segment representatives. The STECF EWG will be held on the week commencing on 12 June 2023.

- European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)

The LDAC is committed to continue playing an active role as member of the Advisory Board of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA).

Since 1 April 2023, the LDAC is also the representative of all Advisory Councils before EFCA Administrative Board. The term of mandate is one year so it will perform this role during the first 9 months of Y17, i.e., until 31 March 2024. During this mandate, the LDAC will seek to make it more visible and promote the work of EFCA in the international dimension of the CFP in line with previous advice in this subject from 2017¹⁸.

Regarding its focus, the LDAC will promote a higher visibility and role of EFCA in the international dimension of fisheries, through regional monitoring and control programmes (such as the one which is part of PESCAO project in West Africa...), regional JDPs including RFMOs areas (NAFO and ICCAT), and capacity building and training missions to third countries and tools (e.g., online manuals for inspectors).

Furthermore, it will also follow up the conclusions and recommendations for future activities of EFCA stemming from the second 5-year Evaluation report from 2017-2021 which were presented in Vigo on 25 October 2022. In particular, the LDAC will look at the recommendations on the review of the functioning of the Advisory Board and its relations with Administrative Board, and the role of EFCA in implementing the international dimension of the CFP. The LDAC participated actively during the consultation process and submitted a reply to the online enquiry and poll on the evaluation on 7 April 2022 (Year 15).

- Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among Atlantic States bordering the Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO-COMHAFAT)

The LDAC signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with ATLAFCO-COMHAFAT in 2013. This MoU is still in force and actively enforced through mutual attendance and participation at joint meetings, seminars and events; and including an annual coordination meeting expected to take place in the third or fourth quarter of 2023.

- AFRIFISH-Net (Western Indian Ocean)

The LDAC has signed a MoU in May 2023 in Stockholm with the Pan-African Platform of Non-State Actors in Fisheries and Aquaculture (AFRIFISH), an organisation within the framework of African Union after a year of contacts to bridge a partnership for cooperation among EU industrial and African artisanal fisheries stakeholders with common goals and concerted action to move forward a sustainable fisheries agenda.

The MoU is to provide a framework of cooperation to facilitate collaboration between the Parties with the aim to further their shared goals and objectives identified in their work programmes or strategic plans, including provision of joint or harmonized advice to the competent authorities and governing bodies from the EU and Africa in the establishment and implementation of policies on the EEZ waters of the African continent that have a direct or indirect environmental, social and economic impact both on artisanal and industrial fishers of Africa and the EU.

- IOC/ECOFISH (Eastern Indian Ocean)

In line with the recommendations made for expanding the network of partnerships at the Second strategic report of the LDAC Performance Review, the LDAC has established in previous years informal contacts with responsible coordinators from ECOFISH Programme run by the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) with the view of collaborating in specific actions and develop a partnership in the West Indian Ocean. The LDAC will aim to develop in Year 17 a

¹⁸ https://ldac.eu/images/documents/publications/LDAC_Opinion_on_EFCA_Role_on_International_Dimension_of_CFP.pdf

strategy to close links with ECOFISH/IOC through a concept note in order to identify possible areas of collaboration and participation in the programme during Year 17. A clear mandate will be sought first by the Executive Committee to decide if there will be an institutional agreement (MoU) formalized between both institutions; or rather it will rely on punctual collaborations in tasks or actions a more informal manner.

Planned recommendations for year 17:

No	Issue/subject	Link with the CFP	WG/FG at the origin of the recommendation	Planned date of adoption (if available)
1	Impact of Climate Change in international fisheries (both high seas and EEZ of third country waters) fisheries Advice on	Climate Change / European Green Deal / Energy efficiency transition	WG5	3rd quarter of 2023
2	Implementation of IOG agenda of the EU	IOG / SDGs / Blue Economy / Deepsea mining	WG5	3 rd quarter of 2023
3	Annual Advice in preparation of NAFO 45th Annual Meeting	IOG - RFMOs	WG2	August-September 2023
4	Management measures for tropical tunas and sharks in preparation of ICCAT Annual Meeting	IOG -RFMOs	WG1	October-November 2023
5	Conservation and management measures for tuna and tuna-like species and sharks in preparation of WPFC Annual Meeting	IOG-RFMOs	WG1	October-November 2023
6	Fisheries management for shared small pelagic stocks in West African countries (Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal, The Gambia, Bissau...)	Regional fisheries arrangements, SFPAs, Governance, IUU fishing	WG4	4th quarter of 2023
7	Implementation of SFPAs: benefits and challenges for coastal communities in third countries	SFPAs, access arrangements, role of artisanal fisheries, social dimension	WG4	First quarter of 2024
8	Overview of EU relations with specific third countries (tbc) to promote sustainable and responsible fishing	Fight against IUU fishing, implementation of SFPAs, trade aspects, labour and social rights, role of artisanal fisheries	WG5	Second quarter of 2024
9	Report and recommendations on External Dimension of CFP based on Communication of CFP today and tomorrow	European Green Deal / CFP	WG5	Second quarter of 2024

LDAC planning of meetings:

LDAC PLANNING OF MEETINGS (from 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023)

No	Date (for the first 6 months, please provide precise dates)	Topics /Subjects of meeting	Type of meeting (physical/planned/hybrid)	European Commission participation requested (yes/no)	If Commission participation requested, specific issues to be dealt with	Priority for a Commission participation (from 1 to 4) (1= highest priority)
1	June 2023	Focus Group on Climate Change and Fisheries	Virtual	no	n.a.	3
2	August 2023	Focus Group on NAFO	Virtual	no	n.a.	4
3	Mid-end September 2023	Coordination mtg of LDAC Chairs and Vice Chairs in preparation of WGs	Hybrid (Madrid/Zoom) but encouraging physical attendance where possible	no	n.a.	4
4	Late September / Early October 2023	Focus Group on ICCAT Tropical Tuna stocks and sharks	Virtual	yes	State of play on ICCAT stocks and proposals; time plan	2
5	Mid/end October 2023	Working Groups 1 (Tuna RFMOs), 2 (North Atlantic fisheries), 4 (SFPAs) and 5 (Horizontal Issues)	Hybrid (Brussels or Spain/Zoom) but encouraging physical attendance where possible	yes	IOTC, ICCAT, NAFO, NEAFC, SFPAs, IUU, China, IOG, UN processes, Social Dimension	1
6	Late October/early November 2023	Focus Group on Western and Central Pacific (WCPFC) stocks	Virtual	yes	State of play on WCPFC stocks and habitat and proposals; time plan	2
7	Late November / early December 2023	Executive Committee	Hybrid (Madrid/Zoom) but encouraging physical attendance where possible	yes	Update from DG MARE on CFP Report and state of play of EU public consultation	1
8	January 2024	Focus Group on fisheries management for shared small pelagic stocks in West Africa	Virtual	yes	Update on state of small pelagic stocks (CECAF) and implementation of SFPAs (MARE)	2
9	January-February 2024	LDAC-COMHAFAT Annual Coordination Meeting	Hybrid (Morocco/Spain) but encouraging physical attendance where possible	yes	n.a.	3

10	February-March 2024	Coordination mtg of LDAC Chairs and Vice Chairs in preparation of WGs	Hybrid (Madrid/Zoom) but encouraging physical attendance where possible	no	n.a.	4
11	March-April 2023	Working Groups 1 (Tuna RFMOs), 2 (North Atlantic fisheries), 4 (SFPAs) and 5 (Horizontal Issues)	Hybrid (Brussels/Spain/Zoom) but encouraging physical attendance where possible	yes	IOTC, ICCAT, NAFO, NEAFC, SFPAs, IUU, China, IOG, UN processes, Social Dimension	1
12	Executive Committee	Mid-May 2023	Hybrid (place tbc) but encouraging physical attendance where possible	yes	Horizontal topics on CFP External Dimension; Administrative and financial issues.	2
13	General Assembly	Mid-May 2023	Hybrid (place tbc) but encouraging physical attendance where possible	yes	Functioning of the ACs (e.g., lump sum approach) Global overview of the LDAC financial year, work plan and actions, and summary of advice adopted	2
*	Other “ad hoc” Focus Group/s or Steering Committees	During the year (at members request)	To be confirmed	yes	Topic-based meetings identified as important or relevant by the LDAC	2-3
*	Informal technical coordination meetings with MARE on IOG	During the year before meetings where the EU will have a mandate (UN processes, FAO COFI, BBNJ, etc.) either at MARE or LDAC request	To be confirmed	yes	RFMOs (IOTC, WPFC, SIOFA, NPFC...), FAO, CBD, ISA, UNGA, BBNJ	1

ⁱ https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/policy/common-fisheries-policy-cfp_es