

ANNEX I

WORK PROGRAMME FOR LDAC Year 15

1 June 2021 - 31 May 2022

Background

Legislative framework

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 various issues on management of marine resources outside EU waters. Its role and functioning are defined in the CFP Regulation (UE) No 1380/2013¹, namely articles 43-45 and Annex III; and in the Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/1575. Furthermore, Advisory Councils are recognized as organizations aiming a European interest and they are beneficiary of co-funding by the European Commission in accordance with recital 84 and article 89 of EMFF Regulation (EU) No 508/2014.

The LDAC is fully operational since 31 May 2007. Its area of competence and geographical remit is all non-EU waters including both the EEZ of third countries and the high seas in international waters.

In terms of composition and membership, the LDAC is currently made up by 50 member organisations from 12 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 in particular environmental and cooperation for development NGOs), respectively.

Transparency initiatives

The LDAC supports full transparency on its financial contributions and activities. As such, it is registered on the EU Transparency Register of organizations with ID No. 905805219213-67 – Link:

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

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

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

²For year 15, three new organisations have applied for membership of the LDAC and are currently in process of admission subject to decision of the Executive Committee and General Assembly, namely Pew Charitable Trusts, Global Tuna Alliance(GTA) and Earthworm Foundation-Tuna Protection Alliance (TUPA) .

Mission and objectives

The **LDAC's mission** is to promote the conservation of marine biodiversity and the sustainable use and management of fisheries resources outside EU waters from an environmental, economic and social perspective. It also seeks to achieving a level playing field and improving the economic competitiveness of EU's Member States fleets vis à vis non-EU fleets.

To achieve this mission, the LDAC will continue assisting and providing evidence-based and technical advice to the European Commission and Member States, whether on its own initiative or in response to consultations and requests, with the aim to improve the implementation of the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy.

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

- a. Demanding coherence between EU policies which have impacts on the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy.
- b. Ensuring effective implementation of the EU Fisheries Control system and in particular the fight against IUU fishing and transparency of fishing activities of the external fishing fleet (SMEFF Regulation).
- c. Promoting decent labour conditions and social rights at sea in compliance with international legal instruments of maritime safety.
- d. Supporting a higher profile of the EU in the international ocean and fisheries governance, in line with the Headline Ambition "making a Europe stronger in the world".
- e. Providing advice to remove barriers to transparency, accountability and dialogues with coastal states for implementation of SFPAs.
- f. Participating both in technical preparatory meetings called for the EU and attending RFMO annual meetings of key Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (NAFO, ICCAT, IOTC) as members of the EU delegation.
- g. 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 (UNGA, FAO, UNDP, ISA...).
- h. Helping to gather information and initiatives from operators and OIG which might be useful to the fulfilment and achievement of the UN 2030 Agenda, and in particular Sustainable Development Goal 14.

Overarching 5 LDAC work priorities for Year 15

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 priorities, the LDAC will try to align its work with that of the European Commission through regular coordination meetings with DG MARE.

In Year 15, the LDAC intends to provide evidence-based advice to the EU in the field of international ocean governance. As a result, five work priorities have been identified for this year, namely:

1. International Ocean Governance and Level playing field of fishing products into EU market

The LDAC has actively contributed during Year 14 in both the various IOG forums, and the public consultation launched by DG MARE, culminating in the Executive Secretary's intervention at the EC IOG High Level Conference held in December 2020. In year 15, the LDAC will continue assisting DG MARE in fulfilling the Headline Ambition of making "a stronger Europe in the world" set in the EC political guidelines 2019-2024 and embedded in the mandate of the Commissioner for Oceans, Environment and Fisheries. In particular, it will assist EU by providing stakeholders advice prior to negotiations before RFMOs and relevant international fora such as UNGA, BBNJ, CBD or ISA.

The LDAC has been working in Year 14 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) 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 will be completed in Year 15 and will be complementary of that initiated by the MAC. It will look specifically at broader aspects than 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. This position paper will serve as foundation to develop through year 15 a number of specific advice in relation to some/all of the above-mentioned topics.

2. Social Dimension of the CFP

The LDAC will be active in the promotion of labour and social issues related to fisheries in the EU agenda. The LDAC has agreed a joint work plan with the EU Social Dialogue Committee (EUROPECHE-ETF) to develop a route map with specific deliverables and actions for 2021-2022. The aim is to prepare advice to the European Commission to promote a harmonized and robust legal framework within the EU in line with internationally agreed social and labour standards for fisheries and link this process to the CFP report in 2022. It will also 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, IMO STCW-F or IMO Cape Town Agreement. Last, it will seek to formulate specific recommendations on how to improve working and living conditions of fishers at sea for distant waters fleets, including for examples training and employment rights (minimum salary, rest times, health and pensions benefits...) related to migrant workers, as well as framework for collective bargaining agreements or review of measurements on fishing capacity (alternative systems to Gross Tonnage), amongst others.

In the international arena, the LDAC will also look to raise awareness on the need to ensure socially responsible fisheries around the world. As such, it is envisaged to contribute as stakeholder in the consultation process and regional workshops set up by FAO in relation to the Guidance Document on social responsibility of the fisheries value chains, in line with outcomes of FAO COFI 34 and inform EU and MS on FAO Sub-Committee on Fisheries³.

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

The LDAC will participate in the 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 these evaluations, to make the whole exercise more efficient. The LDAC has already submitted a contribution on the roadmap in the February 2021 to show its interest in this topic.⁴

In particular, it will look at current implementation of SFPAs and how to improve utilization of funds in favour of both increasing profitability and value addition of the EU fishing fleets and improving capacity building, training and development of coastal states authorities and local communities from third countries, including artisanal fishers through optimization of use of sectoral support. It will also look at reviewing and monitoring of agreements in force analyzing methodology and content of *ex ante* and *ex post* evaluations; identification of priorities linked to the agreement and needs assessment of recipients from third countries (policy makers and stakeholders); improving transparency of implementation of SFPAs through publication of minutes of scientific and joint committees; and reporting of fishing activities via publication of public and private agreements from EU and non-EU vessels signed with the third country; the impacts of SFPAs on the marine environment, including by-catch and non-targeted species; socio-economic analysis including studies of value chain and trade flows of fish products; etc.

4. Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) where the EU is a contracting or signatory party or has observer status.

The LDAC will aim to provide in Year 15 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 (namely NAFO, ICCAT and IOTC). Special focus will be put on stocks and fisheries for those where urgent action is needed in 2021-2022 such as 3M Cod and Shrimp in NAFO; Atlantic bigeye tuna or northern Atlantic Shortfin mako in ICCAT; or yellowfin and skipjack tunas in IOTC. 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.

³ Link to report of COFI 34 Session – see recommendation 39:
https://ldac.eu/images/COFI_34_Draft_Report_for_Adoption_en.pdf

⁴ 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->

5. Review of EU Fisheries Control Systems - Implementation of Fight against IUU Fishing (IUU).

The LDAC will continue working on Year 15 on proposals to improve the fisheries control system outside EU waters, including the IUU and the Sustainable Management of the External Fishing Fleet Regulations. With that purpose, shortcomings will be identified and areas to improve from the side of the EU, Member States and fishing operators. Specific emphasis will be put on publicity of the EU database on fishing authorisations as well as publication of key features of beneficial ownership and measures to improve identification of vessels including compulsory IMO numbers and promotion of FAO global record of fishing vessels, amongst others.

Another important area of work will be the transition phase from a paper-based to an electronic implementation of the EU Catch Documentation Scheme (CC – IT CATCH) and the improved system of mutual assistance between MS for early detection of already rejected or suspicious consignments. Last, the LDAC will ask for regular briefings and update from DG MARE IUU unit on state of play of EU carding system (green, yellow and red cards), in particular for countries of interest such as Morocco, Ghana, China, Thailand, Ecuador or Guinea Conakry, amongst others.

Work priorities identified for each Working Group

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

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

The Secretariat and key members will attend if feasible PA1 (tropical tuna) and PA4 (sharks) intersessional meetings and workshops throughout the year to follow the deliberation process amongst CPCs and scientists. The LDAC will provide feedback to the Commission ahead of the Intersessional meetings and participate at the Commission's meeting with stakeholders expected to happen in fall 2021 in preparation of next ICCAT Annual Meeting planned for November 2021. 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, with priority on northern Atlantic shortfin mako. In respect to the latter, the LDAC Secretariat will collect information on the EU longline fleet representatives from Spain and Portugal on the voluntary spatial measures they set in place to decrease their catches significantly, namely spatial-seasonal closed areas and good handling practices via release of alive specimens.

- *Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC):*

The LDAC will provide 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 tuna and skipjack. It 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, if requested from DG MARE or coming from the members. A dedicated virtual Focus Group on IOTC was created in Year 14 and will continue its work in Year 15 to produce a fully-fledged advice on conservation and management measures for all gears targeting yellowfin tuna and associated tropical tuna stocks prior to the forthcoming Annual Meeting in June 2021. The topic on introducing recommendations on measures to fight against IUU fishing will be also considered here for inclusion at request of the NGO coalition.

- *Western Pacific Fisheries Commission (WPFCC):*

The LDAC will look into the possibility of developing advice including topics such as electronic monitoring schemes, cross-listing of vessels for IUU and other MCS provisions, labour conditions onboard fishing vessels, etc. Also, the Secretariat will try to gather qualitative evidence of impacts of COVID-19 in the economic performance and activities for the EU fleets operating in the Pacific fisheries; stating specific examples of problems by fishing gears and if possible, suggest adaptive measures. They will also compile if possible, the adaptive measures taken and in general facilitate the flow of information between members and DG MARE. Finally, feedback will be provided on feasibility of increasing electronic observer programmes for both purse seiners and long liners to ensure data quality during COVID-19.

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

The LDAC will seek 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 Secretariat will liaise with its partner in West Africa COMHAFAT to obtain the ToR and work plan on the feasibility study on CMM related to Fish Aggregated Devices (FADs) in the Atlantic fisheries of Africa (both in the high seas and EEZ of coastal states).

The Secretariat will circulate questionnaires and information provided by appointed consultants/scientists to allow those WG1 members interested to participate in the consultation process prior to formulate recommendations that will inform African member states to assess the effectiveness of FAD measures in their countries.

Working Group 2: North Atlantic Fisheries Agreement and RFMOs

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

The LDAC will invite in Year 15 the negotiating team of DG MARE to forthcoming meetings to keep informed on the content of the EU proposal and the state of play of the negotiations. 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, commercial measures, monitoring of EEA negotiations or, for the specific case of relations with Norway, fishing regime access to Svalbard Fisheries Protection Zone.

The LDAC will also liaise with other concerned ACs to clarify the evolution in its composition, role and functioning vis à vis other Advisory Councils in light of the implementation of the EU and UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) related to its impact on fisheries:

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

This might require in Year 15 internal adjustments or adaptive ways of providing stakeholders' advice in coordination with existing or new future ACs in the context of bilateral EU-UK and/or trilateral EU-UK-Norway negotiations on fishing opportunities in 2022.

- *North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC):*

The LDAC will rely on DG MARE correspondent unit and its own industry members to know update information on Coastal States consultations. Also, it will 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 biology and management of demersal and deep-sea stocks in this Regulatory Area⁵.

- *Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO):*

Similarly, as in previous years, the LDAC will setup a dedicated task force/focus group to develop a fully-fledged advice to be frontloaded ideally at the EC technical meeting with stakeholders in August 2021 in preparation of the NAFO Annual Meeting planned for the third week of September 2021.

- *Impact of Brexit in the composition, functioning and competencies of the Advisory Councils:*

The LDAC is currently thinking on possible restructuring of this Working Group to waiting to get clear instructions/guidance from the EU in the second half of 2021 or first quarter of 2022 on the impact of the EU-UK TCA to its material scope and competencies.

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, resignation of Vice Chair and the lack of interest of the members expressed by the members of the Executive Committee in keeping

⁵ N.B. The competence on small pelagic stocks corresponds to the Pelagic AC.

this meeting with very low attendance. The remaining topics dealt with there (CCMLAR, SEAFO, SIOFA, NAPO, Atlantic South West, and role of fishing investments in third countries) have been reallocated between Working Group 5 and the Executive Committee. However, the number of the subsequent working groups have not been changed at this stage.

Working Group 4: Bilateral relations between the EU and third countries - SFPAs

- The LDAC will invite DG MARE at forthcoming meetings in Year 15 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.
- 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 standards.
- In addition, the LDAC will look at aspects of the SFPAs social clause as well as the implementation of ILO Conventions for partner countries sea-farers employment conditions, providing equivalent level of protections to third country workers and the cooperation on training on safety standards.
- The LDAC will participate both in the public consultation addressed by DG MARE on the evaluation process of the SFPAs that 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> It will also contribute to any targeted consultations foreseen by the Commission or the designated consultants to undertake this work on its behalf.
- The LDAC and COMHAFAT agreed to hold a joint workshop on the implementation of SFPAs identifying strengths and weakness with specific examples of countries. In terms of participation, it will involve European Commission, administrations from EU and MS, EU fleet operators, NGOs, and representatives of local fishing communities, including artisanal fishers and women in fisheries as well as civil society.
- 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:
 - 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.
 - 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 2021.
 - 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 in early 2022. 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, training and living conditions of local fishing communities and have a better valorisation of the image of the 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 has been explained as main work priority for Y15 (see above).

- *UNGA related international processes*

The LDAC will liaise with DG MARE to be informed periodically on the IOG agenda and meetings calendar for 2021-2022. It will also analyse the outcomes highlighted in the DG summary report on the outcomes of the IOG consultation (published in February 2021)⁶ and aim to participate in technical preparatory meetings in relation to the following topics:

- Draft UN Treaty on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)
- UN 2030 Lisbon Agenda (SDGs)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD – Post-Aichi targets)
- Annual Meetings of RFMOs

- *Labour and social aspects related to fisheries - Social Dimension of CFP*

The LDAC will provide 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 participating in the dialogue and consultation to convey its views on the FAO guidance document for social responsibility and sustainability in the fisheries value chain.

- *Implementation of IUU Regulation*

The LDAC will invite DG MARE to provide regular updates of their work on implementing the IUU Regulation. The DG MARE unit dealing with IUU was invited to let the LDAC know in which specific topics they would like to be informed or elements that they wish to see included in LDAC's advice regarding specific issues related to implementation of 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 (in the present or recently), should there be a specific request coming from the member/s. In the past, interest was indicated in countries such as China, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Thailand, Ecuador or Guinea Conakry, amongst others.

- *Deepsea mining in international waters*

The LDAC will follow up ongoing negotiations for the future adoption of a Mining Code taking place currently at the International Seabed Authority. The LDAC Secretariat will call for a Focus Group meeting with the task of producing advice in this matter, either stand alone or in collaboration with other ACs. Secretariats and members of other ACs, as well as technical and scientific experts on this matter will be invited to participate. The advice will be consistent with the previous one and will look to address the EU position ahead of next Council meetings of the International Seabed Authority. This work will be done on the basis that deep-sea mining is a common heritage of (hu)mankind and therefore the development of

⁶ Link to IOG Forum in DG MARE website: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/frontpage/1646>

an ISA Mining Code must be in line with international standards and commitments on the protection of marine environment, PA principle and implementation of EBA in relation to regulation of deep-sea mining. If ready, the LDAC will liaise with the DG MARE and the relevant EU MS (e.g., Spain) to engage in technical preparations ahead of the forthcoming ISA Assembly and Council meetings scheduled for July 2021.

Impact of COVID-19 in organization of work and financial implications for Year 15

Since the declaration of the health emergency situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and its outbreak in Europe in March 2020, the LDAC has held all its meetings in virtual format. This has changed the way of working during year 14 and will most likely affect to the whole or most of Year 15.

The LDAC has tried to keep up the pace of work, including taking advantage of the circumstances to hold online focus groups on specific issues. For this reason, a specific protocol has been agreed to have such type of meetings. Multiple topic-based Focus Groups will now be called in Year 15 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 these 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.

This situation will also have a considerable budgetary impact (in terms of less expenditure due to tele working of staff, travel restrictions and savings made on costs associated to meetings in different countries) that will need to be addressed. The inability to travel will maintain its impact on the LDAC budget and expenditures.

For year 15, the LDAC staff will keep working with IT multiple language conferencing and meetings software (e.g., Interactio, VoiceBoxer, WebEx, Zoom, Google Hangouts...) with simultaneous interpretation services as well as online consultation tools.

The Secretariat has created a dedicated section on its website titled “COVID-19: EU and international legislation” to help members and observers: <https://www.ldac.eu/en/topical/topical-covid-19>. It will be regularly updated with screening and monitoring measures taken by WHO, European Commission and national governments to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the COVID crisis.

Working practices and relations with DG MARE

Following the recommendations made at the first part of the LDAC performance review, the LDAC will seek a more informal and 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. The LDAC will also report on work progress regarding the deliverables and milestones achieved during Year 15 through formal channels such as plenary Working Group and Executive Committee meetings, and written procedures via the final report of Year 15, respectively.

Lastly, the LDAC highlights one more year the importance of the role of the AC coordinators 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 are always welcoming of DG MARE staff being present at the General Assembly and /or Executive Committee housekeeping meetings to present and/or clarify administrative, budgetary and procedural matters, oversee election procedures and/or assist in informing policy decisions when required.

Work coordination with other Advisory Councils:

- Inter AC

The Inter AC Secretaries (and Chairs) meetings in 2020 and 2021 have identified a number of horizontal policy issues of common interest for several ACs. Taking into account of the new reality arising from travel restrictions and remote work as a result of COVID-19, the LDAC Secretariat will intensify its coordination with other ACs via

regular virtual meetings for preparation of topics related to coordination meetings with DG MARE in relation to questions related to composition, structure and functioning of the Advisory Councils and feedback to DG MARE study on report of CFP by 2022. It will also engage only with those relevant ACs when necessary to develop joint papers or positions in topics of shared interest such as impact in the work of the Advisory Councils of the post-Brexit process (PELAC, NSAC, NWWAC, BSAC); ecosystem approach to fisheries management (including impact of human activities such as windmills or deep-sea mining), social dimension of CFP, marine pollution and plastics, climate change, MPAs, ocean governance, etc.

- **The Market Advisory Council (MAC)**

The LDAC Secretary will continue attending the Market Advisory Council Meetings (in particular WGs 1 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 for both ACs, e.g., implications of FTA, ETA and trade partnership agreements, GSP+ systems and WTO trade related measures to human, fight against IUU fishing for EU distant water fleets and stakeholders.

- **The Outermost Regions Advisory Council (ORAC)**

The LDAC will continue inviting the ORAC key representatives (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, amongst others. Also, the possibility of organising a shared event for the Joint Ministerial Conference scheduled for 3-4 June 2021 could be an option: <https://www.allatlantic2021.eu/programme/>

Work initiatives with European and international organisations:

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

As in previous years, the LDAC Secretary participated in individual expert capacity at the two meetings of the Expert Working Group (EWG 20-03 and 20-06) on the Annual Economic Report of the EU Fishing Fleet for 2020 (AER-1 and AER-2), which took place virtually due to COVID-19 pandemic. The Secretary played a valuable and active role contributing as coordinator and rapporteur of the regional chapters on the Distant Water Fleets (under Other Fishing Regions). In particular, he was tasked with drafting partially or fully the sections related to North Atlantic-NAFO, ICCAT, IOTC and CECAF⁷. This work required a review and fine tuning of methodology and to carry out a comprehensive EU-MAP data analysis. A carry qualitative assessment of economic data was carried out to describe future trends and outlook.

⁷ CECAF got a qualitative characterisation of fleets and fisheries with no qualitative analysis due to the absence of economic data reported by flag MS; and the North East Atlantic could not be completed due to lack of time and relevant expertise.

- **European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)**

The LDAC will continue attending and actively participating at EFCA Advisory Board meetings twice a year. It will also 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 channel through the DG MARE any contribution or response to future proposals by EFCA or the designated external consultancy company on the review of the functioning of the Advisory Board and relations with Administrative Board as part of the second five-year performance review process of EFCA for 2016-2020.

- **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 first quarter of 2022.

In terms of specific areas of work for Year 15, a joint high-level workshop is expected to take place in the second half of 2021 on Implementation of SFPAs from a third country's perspective: progress and drawbacks. These shall include specific case studies of African countries benefiting from the agreements and not only EU and African fishers, political authorities and administrations will be invited and involved, but also African small-scale fishers, workers in the value chain including women, and civil society including NGOs.

More information about list of actions to be developed in 2021 is available under Annex III of the report of the annual meeting between LDAC and COMHAFAT, held on 11 February 2021: https://ldac.eu/images/Final-Report_LDAC_ATLAFCO_Annual_Mtg_2021_3.pdf

- **ECOFISH Programme**

In line with the recommendations made for expanding the network of partnerships at the Second part of the LDAC Performance Review⁸, the LDAC is currently establishing informal contacts with responsible coordinators from ECOFISH Programme run by the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) to develop a partnership in the West Indian Ocean.

The LDAC will develop in Year 15 a strategy to close links with ECOFISH/IOC through a concept note based on the informal meeting held in February 2021 in order to identify possible areas of collaboration and participation in the programme during Year 15. 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.

⁸ See pages 30 (international cooperation practices) and 51-52 (networking and policy work): https://ldac.eu/images/FINAL_PerformanceReview_II_v5.2_compressed_26_05_2020.pdf

Report on other sources of funding received: Update on EU funded H2020 FarFish Project:

The LDAC is a partner of the EU H2020 project FarFish which commenced in June 2017 and runs for a period of 4 years. In Year 15, the FarFish project will reach its final milestones, with the project set to be completed by November 2021. The new finishing date is due to a granted extension of six months, under the *force majeure* clause of the project's contract. This clause has been invoked after delays in the project caused by the pandemic and additional funding has been awarded to the LDAC by reallocation of underspent to cover the salary related costs of the LDAC project coordinator.

The aim of this project is to contribute to sustainable and more efficient fisheries management of stocks that are of particular interest for the EU in the EEZ of third countries under SFPAs or in international waters.

The project builds on a multidisciplinary expertise of over 25 international organizations which are partners of the project consortium, including scientists, IT companies, universities and stakeholders. They work together to develop Responsive Fisheries Management System (RFMS) with focus on six case studies: 4 in the EEZ of third countries with SFPAs, namely Mauritania, Senegal, Cabo Verde and Seychelles; and 2 in the High Seas, i.e., South East (SEAFO FAO 47) and South West Atlantic (FAO 41).

The LDAC is involved in the project contributing actively to Work Packages 1 (stakeholder interaction), 2 (biological knowledge), 3 (value chain analysis), 4 (development of management plans), 6 (development of management tools) and 7 (capacity building and dissemination). The LDAC will be involved directly or indirectly in 19 out of a total of 24 deliverables to be made available from WPs 1,2,3,4, 6 and 7. The list of deliverables includes a second report on biological and ecological knowledge, final reports on value chain analysis and governance structures for each of the Case Study (CS) areas and a report on the success of the self-sampling programme.

The project will have its final annual meeting on May 26th-27th 2021, where the final version for the management recommendations (MR2) will be presented. As regards the main task to be accomplished by the LDAC, the Secretariat will be organizing an online Conference to discuss the external dimension of the CFP, foreseen for the 1st and 2nd of June 2021. The Conference on the External Dimension of the CFP will provide a forum where worldwide stakeholders from the fishing, industry and NGO sectors, together with relevant policy makers, will reflect and discuss on the importance of the EU role in the external dimension and challenges ahead. The Conference will result in a policy advice document that would be of use in the formulation of proposals in this field for the revision of the current CFP, due 2022.

In summary, by the end of the year 14 (May 2021), FarFish is expected to have reached 13 out of 19 milestones, and 56 out of 64 deliverables. The remaining will be reached during year 15, before the end of the project in November 2021.

In compliance with EC financial and administrative rules, it is important to note that the Secretariat has set up a completely separate system of accounting, reporting and recording of time spent by the staff in relation to completion of tasks linked to this project.

PROVISIONAL PLANNING OF LDAC MEETINGS (1st June 2021- 31st May 2022)

Title of the meeting	Date	Place	Issue to be discussed
Coordination meeting with DG MARE	June-July (TBC)	Videoconference/ To be confirmed	Alignment and coordination of topics of the work programme of the LDAC
Coordination meeting of LDAC Chairs and Vice Chairs	September 2021 and February 2022	Videoconference/ To be confirmed	Development of proposals for advice in relation to high profile issues which must be dealt with by the LDAC prior to its next round of Working Groups
Working Groups 1, 4, 5	2nd half of October 2021	To be confirmed	Items related and important for each WG (see above)
Working Group 2	October / Early November 2022	To be confirmed	Items related to WG2 (North Atlantic Fisheries Agreements and RFMOs)
Executive Committee	Late November / early December 2021	To be confirmed	Administrative, communication and financial issues. Adoption of letters and advice.
Working Groups 1, 2, 4 and 5	March / April 2022	To be confirmed	Items related and important for each WG (see above)
Executive Committee	May 2022	To be confirmed	Administrative, communication and financial issues. Adoption of letters and opinions.
General Assembly	May 2022	To be confirmed	Global overview of the AC financial year, work plan and actions, and summary of advice adopted
“Ad-hoc” Focus Group / WGs	During the year (at request of the members)	To be confirmed	Topic-based meetings identified as important or relevant by the LDAC members