

## WORKING PAPER FOR LDAC WG4 – 15 October 2024

### DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### **LDAC FOCUS GROUP ON FISHERIES MANAGEMENT FOR SHARED STOCKS OF SMALL PELAGIC IN WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

##### Background

Attempts to manage fisheries in NW Africa on a regional basis go back a long time in history. The first organisation to be established for this purpose was the Committee for Eastern Central Atlantic Fisheries (CECAF) in 1967. Other organisations followed such as the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) or COMHAFAT. However, despite these international efforts over several decades, not a single binding international management agreement has been concluded in West Africa so far. There are many possible explanations, but the most likely is the absence of political willingness by member states to delegate part of the sovereignty over national fish stock to an international organization (Corten, 2021).

##### History of LDAC advice 2021-2024

The LDAC has worked on this topic for several years with specific focus on small pelagic stocks. In 2021, it adopted an advice on regional fisheries management for small pelagic stocks in West Africa which can be read here:

[https://ldac.eu/images/EN\\_LDAC\\_Opinion\\_Regional\\_Fisheries\\_Management\\_West\\_Africa\\_R-04-21.WG4.pdf](https://ldac.eu/images/EN_LDAC_Opinion_Regional_Fisheries_Management_West_Africa_R-04-21.WG4.pdf)

In 2022-2024, the LDAC has discussed at WG4 other related pieces of advice, letters and recommendations such as the [proposal for management plan for small pelagics in Mauritania](#) (November 2022), or the [need to address sustainability concerns on Norway exploitation of small pelagics stocks used as fishmeal for salmon](#) (April 2024).

In its Annual Work Programme for 2024-2025, the LDAC to continue with this work. For that reason, it proposed the setup of a dedicated Focus Group that aims to draft and advice on this subject.

##### Proposed elements to be included in the draft advice:

###### *Science*

- Look at existing scientific knowledge and assessments for small pelagic stocks at MS level and at CECAF (Small Pelagics Working Group<sup>1</sup>);
- Impacts of climate change on small pelagics abundance and distribution<sup>2</sup>
- Request for resources for continuation on collection, sampling, submission and processing of scientific data;
- Enhancing the role of science in African States and promote regional collaboration in West Africa with a proposal to enhance the role of CECAF;

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fao.org/in-action/eaf-nansen/news-events/detail/fr/c/1698202/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://lemag.ird.fr/fr/face-aux-effets-du-rechauffement-les-poissons-ouest-africains-migrent-vers-le-nord>

### *Management and control*

- Reporting and transparency of commercial data regarding total removals of small pelagic stocks from EU and non-EU distant water fleets;
- Adopt stringent measures to fight IUU fishing;
- Formulate coherent measures for management of pelagic stocks to be inserted in protocols of EU SFPAs with neighboring African Coastal States;
- Establish conservation and management measures for shared stocks in African waters for EEZs, and identify key arguments supporting the creation of a dedicated non-tuna RFMO in West Africa;
- Formulate sensible management proposals (such as reduction of effort) that balances highly dependent artisanal fisheries on the resource;
- Insert coherent measures to manage pelagic stocks across SFPAs;

### *Food security and nutrition*

- Support food security in Africa in terms of nutrition and public health through supply of small pelagics to local markets and promote human consumption above animal one.

### Specific focus on sardinella

- There is a solid scientific research network in northwest Africa with modern institutes in Morocco, Mauritania and Senegal. Promoting the role of CECAF has been instrumental in coordinating scientific research and providing management advice. The problem, however, is the implementation of the advice and the continuation of surveys/campaigns. So far, West African governments have not been really interested in making efforts to jointly managing international fish stocks
- The advice could suggest starting international management on a small scale for this very specific project: the restoration and management of the joint sardinella in Mauritania and Senegal. This could be done by setting up a joint management committee between the two countries that has sufficient power and finances to take appropriate actions. The committee should also set up its own scientific working group independent of the CECAF small pelagics working group. The bilateral sardinella working group should be provided adequate resources to collect information and provide advice. It also should be in constant dialogue with the responsible managers.

### Timeline and Process

Should members of WG4 agree, call for 1-2 online/hybrid Focus Groups to be held in the first of 2025 with the aim of producing advice by the end of May 2025 at latest.

*Key words: scientific assessments, overfishing, nutrition and health, regional fisheries arrangements, governance, transparency, SFPAs, fight against IUU fishing, RFMOs*