



Code of Conduct for the LDAC

Approved: **May 2026**

The following Code of Conduct has been drawn up with the objective of maximising the efficiency of the meetings and to ensure mutual respect of all participants.

1. All participants should respect the agreed procedures for the submission and circulation of meeting papers, as outlined in the LDAC Rules of Procedure, therefore if someone would like to modify any, the Secretariat would have time to ensure that all documentation is circulated to members on time.
2. Intending meeting participants should ensure that they are adequately prepared for the meeting. Participants should thoroughly review the meeting papers and have prepared notes on any questions which they wish to raise during the course of the meeting. Before each meeting, meeting delegates should visit the LDAC website to review any relevant document or information. (eg. minutes of previous meetings, correspondence with the Commission); or they will contact the Secretariat to clarify doubts or collect information.
3. Members who have not been present at previous meetings will make sure that they are well informed on the issues debated during such meetings. It is not appropriate to block a proposal of recommendation in the Executive Committee when a member has not participated in the meetings and didn't send any comment against the approval of the recommendation with a minimum of 10 days of anticipation to the date of the meeting of the Executive Committee where the recommendation would be approved.
4. Intending participants should register and notify the Secretariat of their attendance within the deadline indicated by the Secretariat for that particular meeting.
5. Delegates should arrive on time for the meeting, and ensure that they are seated in the appropriate location indicated for them at the meeting (eg. member/ observer/ scientific advisor/ working group chair)
6. The participation of any observers, scientific advisors or experts at the meeting should be notified to the Secretariat within the deadline indicated by the Secretariat for that particular meeting. Observers should speak when invited to do so by the chair, and when the expertise is requested.

The following individuals may be invited to participate as observers¹:

- a) Qualified scientists.

¹ In accordance with points (i) and (k) of paragraph 2 of Annex III of the CFP Regulation



b) Representatives of the fisheries sector and other interest groups from third countries, including representatives from RFMOs, that have a fishing interest in the LDAC's areas of competence.

c) Other individuals with specific knowledge or with interests affected by scheduled agenda items may be invited.

- Invitation and access to the meeting shall be sent by the Secretariat on behalf and with the accordance of the Chair & Vice-Chair of the meeting.
- When inviting representatives of the fisheries sector and other interest groups from third countries, the Chair & Vice-Chair of the meeting should especially take into consideration potential conflicts of interest in relation to the relevant agenda item.
- Invited representatives will be advised of their status prior to the meeting, in accordance with the Statutes.

Prior to the meeting, the Secretariat shall inform registered members of the attendance of the invited active observer and the registered members may express their explicit opposition to the participation of the invited active observer. If that opposition is explicitly expressed by the majority of the registered members, the invited individual shall not be allowed to participate.

External speakers from outside the EU institutions are required to attend in person when giving a presentation, unless they have justifiable reasons for participating remotely or have received prior permission from the Chair of the meeting. To ensure smooth proceedings during any online participation, the Chair or Secretariat will make the necessary technical arrangements, including the ability to mute or unmute online participants when required.

7. Questions/interventions made during the course of the meeting should be addressed only to the Chair. Delegates shall respect the authority of the Chair at all times during the meeting, and his or her responsibility to adhere to the pre-agreed meeting agenda. Bearing this in mind the Chair has the right to limit members' time to speak. The Chair has the responsibility to moderate the debate, ensuring all members have the chance to speak and that their views are respected and considered. The aim of our Advisory Council (AC) is consensus, when possible; respect must guide the debate while ensuring that ideas can be confronted in reaching a common position. The LDAC strives to achieve consensus, and if discussions escalate into conflicts contrary to this aim, it is the responsibility of the Chair to intervene and, if necessary, stop the discussion.

8. Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Secretariat and Members must make efforts to reach consensus, so that all members can stand behind the advice. When it is not possible to reach consensus, diverging positions must be clearly included in the main body of the advice text following the relevant majority opinion and must be easily readable and understandable.



The secretariat will ensure that final versions, including all edits in track change in the working language, are distributed to all WGs members giving them 8 days for final review prior to being presented to the Executive Committee for adoption.

9. The Chair should aim to be neutral and represent the interest of the LDAC, not their individual organisation affiliations. If the chair is traveling for a meeting as chair both the chair and the other representative of your organisation can be reimbursed.
10. Interventions made in a meeting should be short, concise and relevant to the topic being discussed. Points should be made clearly and without excessive use of idioms, to facilitate smooth interpretation at the meeting.
11. Meeting delegates who are permitted, by the Chair, to speak at the meeting should avoid repetition of any points already arisen in the course of the discussion. Indeed, they should not waste meeting time by repeating discussions or arguments from former meetings. This will enable the meeting to progress without any unnecessary delays.
12. Participants addressing members at an LDAC meeting for the first time should firstly introduce themselves and who they represent.
13. Meeting delegates, in all of their personal endeavors, initiatives and proposals, should remain aware of the key aim of the LDAC and be as supportive as possible in enabling the delegates at the meeting to achieve consensus on issues/opinions as appropriate. The LDAC is not a lobbying body and shall not be used as such by members for their individual/organizational / national motivations.
14. Members shall not avail of the AOB slot in any meeting to bring up issues that require detailed discussion or decision-making, if so, they will be considered points to be included in future meetings.
15. Finally, it is important that members target the correct forum for discussions and debate. For example, detailed discussions on technical or local issues should take place in working or focus groups whereas the Executive Committee meetings should focus on the tasks that the Rules of Procedure reflect.
16. At the meetings of the Executive Committee each member may receive one delegation to vote from one member who cannot attend. Accumulation of such delegations must be avoided in as much as possible.
17. The secretariat will follow up on each member of the LDAC, on the payment of fees and on the level of participation (present, represented, excused, absent) at the different meetings (General Assembly, Executive Committee, Working Groups). Such follow-up will be made known to the members of the Executive Committee and General Assembly before any decision is made pursuant to the allocation of any seat at the Executive Committee.



18. Non-payment of fees after having been served a cautionary notice with acknowledgement of receipt may be considered as sufficient reason for exclusion.
19. For the Executive Committee member's renovation / re-election it will be necessary that all the General Assembly members who want to be members send their candidacy in the period established by the Secretariat. In case they don't do it, it will be understood that they don't want to be part of the Executive Committee.
20. Whenever LDAC members attend external meetings on behalf of the LDAC, they represent the views and opinion of the LDAC and not their individual organisations. Participation in such meetings is only allowed with prior authorisation through the secretariat. When LDAC members participate in such meetings they should limit their interventions to the agreed mandate or advice of the LDAC and its members. The secretariat will ensure a proper coordination of the message prior to the meeting, including minority statements if appropriate to be conveyed. There will be based on existing opinions, letters, and advice.
21. The LDAC will strive towards equal gender representation for the elected positions of the LDAC and when the LDAC is officially represented in events, recognising that members donate their time and that their positions are time consuming.
22. LDAC member's behaviour should be inclusive and non-discriminatory. Discussions should be held in a polite manner. All members must be aware that they are in a multicultural environment and people of different places have different way to express themselves.
23. The Chair should always maintain its neutrality on its role of moderator. The Chair is also a member that donate time to the group. This should not undermine his/her right to express his/her opinion, or that of his/her organisation, without compromising the needed neutrality as moderator, to facilitate the representation of the organisation of the Chair, in case no other member of his/her organisation attends the meeting. When expressing his/her organisation opinion, it should be clearly stated, and time should be similar to time given to other members.

Annex to the Code of Conduct for LDAC members

Conducting virtual meetings

Background / motivation

Due to the health emergency situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the LDAC started to conduct many virtual meetings. At the Executive Committee held in May 2020, the need to add an Annex to the code of conduct to have a specific protocol agreed by consensus was identified.

This Annex will remain in force once the health emergency situation is over.



Organisation and format of meetings

The General Secretary, in joint agreement with the Chair and Vice Chair of the relevant body (General Assembly / Executive Committee / Working Group / Focus Group) organising the session and the LDAC Steering Committee, will choose the most suitable virtual platform for each meeting subject to budgetary availability, technical requirements and interpreting needs identified or number of participants².

Interested members and observers will be informed within a minimum period of 24 hours, on how to access the meeting (links, software required, audio and video set up, etc.).

Who is entitled to attend?

Each LDAC member organisation is represented by one participant, with an additional representative being able to attend as an active observer provided it is technically possible or there is enough capacity depending on the platform and type of subscription chosen. Experts can also be invited in technical, academical or scientific capacity by request of the Secretariat/Steering Committee to inform the topics included in the agenda. The Secretariat will act as guarantor and will safeguard the openness and transparency of meetings, opening the latter to external observers, requesting them to register in advance owing to security reasons and with individual authentication to ensure the identity of attendees.

Quorum for adoption of decisions

The necessary quorum will be the same as for face-to-face meetings, in conformity with Article XXIV of the LDAC Articles of Association, i.e. simple majority (more than 50%) of the members of the relevant group who are present or represented by mandate or delegation.

The Secretariat will ensure there is **quorum** for the adoption of agreements/decisions, counting the number of members present or represented attending the meetings.

Voting procedure

Each member organisation will have 1 vote.

Voting may be carried out either by public or private ballot, depending on the decision adopted by the relevant group prior to the meeting, provided it is possible in the virtual platform chosen:

1. Public ballot by a “show of hands” by means of clicking on the icon (for, against or abstention) chosen to this end. In the absence of icon or in case of technical problems, an alternative method may be envisaged (e.g. voting in writing on the public chat indicated).

² The list of platforms used in 2020 includes, but is not limited to, the following: Zoom Business, Voiceboxer, Google Meet Hangouts, Microsoft Teams, Interactio-Webex.



2. Secret ballot “in a ballot box” by means of a survey enabling one vote per participant and presenting results anonymously. This could be carried out using a virtual survey or by sending votes through the private chat to the Secretariat.

For the elections of all the LDAC positions/seats, the voting will be held by secret ballot. For the rest of topics, voting will be public unless decided to be done in private by request of members.

In the event that it is compatible and duly justified, voting via email by attendees a posteriori might be also considered for both options.

Creation of advice

The members will comment in writing on the draft using track changes. Any changes requested must offer an alternative text where appropriate and provide the link/reference to any documents/papers cited.

Dissenting comments with no alternative text or reasoning behind will not be taken into account.

Functioning of Virtual Drafting Focus Groups (VFG):

Each Working Group will decide, at the request of any members and with prior discussion, approval and supervision from its Chairs and Vice-Chairs, to establish ad hoc focus groups on specific topics with a definite focus, in order to gather the necessary knowledge to prepare draft advice and work documents that will be subsequently subject to discussion at the (face-to-face or virtual) plenary sessions of the working group meetings³. The Secretariat will be given a specific mandate to do the necessary logistics and organisational arrangements to organise such VFG including topics provided by the WG.

Terms of Reference (ToR) of VFG:

Each VFG may have a set of ToR, based on the following formula:

Following the consultation process initiated within the Working Group, a VFG will be set up and made up of those group members that have expressed an interest in doing so. A maximum of 10-12 participants is expected, preferably 1 member per organisation, to ensure work efficiency and that there is an exchange of ideas during discussion. The composition/membership of the VFG will ensure the adequate participation of all concerned representatives with an appropriate balance of interests and points of view for the participants.

Each Focus Group shall appoint a coordinator, who shall be either the Chair or Vice-Chair of the respective working group or the member who proposes the initiative and/or drafts the

³ As approved at the Executive Committee held on 26 May 2020.



first draft. The coordinator shall be appointed from among the members of the Focus Group before or at the beginning of the first meeting.

The Focus Group coordinator, together with the designated member of the Secretariat, shall be responsible for compiling, integrating and amalgamating all comments received.

The coordinator may decide to limit the scope of the document and the priority content based on the Commission's agenda or the LDAC's own work programme (as agreed by the Working Group). In the first round of comments, comments should be limited to the scope and submit their comments, aiming not to respond to each comment made by other members, in order to facilitate the group's work.

Once all comments have been received, within the established time frame, the updated version will be sent, including the changes/suggestions submitted by the Focus Group members in a second round, and will then be sent to the Working Group for discussion and possible approval.

The aim of the VFG is to prepare an LDAC draft document integrating all comments made or received and identifying diverging opinions, when necessary. Changes made to the draft document using 'Track Changes' will be managed by the Secretariat to ensure consistency between different versions and the integration of all of them. The draft will be available in a single language, which will generally be English unless another LDAC working language is agreed upon.

This draft document will be subsequently submitted to the relevant Working Group and subsequently to the LDAC Executive Committee for their approval. Insofar as possible, an ordinary consultation process will be set with a minimum of 2 weeks for the Working Group and 2 more weeks for the Executive Committee. In the case of consultations following the fast-track procedure, in line with provisions set forth in Article XXV of the Articles of Association⁴, a period of a minimum of 8 calendar days will be set for consultation to the Executive Committee.

In the event that during the consultation process for adoption of a fast-track advice, there are major objections or comments involving a significant modification to the content of the proposed advice, the Secretariat, in joint agreement with the Chair and Vice Chair of the

⁴ Art. XXV of the LDAC Articles of Association: *"For certain specific issues or to decide on urgent recommendations, the chairperson may, through the Secretariat, make a quick consultation with all the Executive Committee members by e-mail or similar, the result of which will have the same validity as a normal decision. In quick consultations, a period to reply will be established which will be not less than eight calendar days, except for such justified cases in which a request is received from an external organisation (the European Commission and/or Member States) to shorten such period, with prior authorisation by the chairperson of the LDAC.*

The adoption of such advice will be governed by the same rules as the ordinary decision-making procedure provided for in Article XXIV.

If the members of the Executive Committee reach an agreement and consent in writing, the procedure can be considered to be completed within those eight calendar days, and consequently, the recommendation may be sent to the European Commission".



relevant Working Group, may call a Virtual Focus Group at the end of the consultation including all those members that have sent comments on its content in order to reach consensus on the final text. Both the Working Group and the Executive Committee will be informed about the outcome once the document has been agreed.

Remote speakers in Virtual or Hybrids meetings

Connection:

- Connect, if possible, with an Ethernet cable for stable internet and clear sound. Otherwise, only very strong and stable WiFi provides the needed sound quality.
- Have your connection and sound tested before the meeting, if help is needed contact the LDAC secretariat ahead of the meeting.
- In order to facilitate the interpreter's work, the use of headphones is recommended.

Turn to speak:

- Only speak when given the floor by the Chair of the meeting.
- The microphone and camera have to be turned on.
- Mute your microphone at all times when not taking the floor.
- In case of reading, please do it slowly. Include pauses and clearly enunciate key elements.
- In case of giving presentations: send the speaking notes or presentation in advance to the LDAC Secretariat that will share them with the interpreters.
- The Chair/Secretariat will have the ability to unmute/mute the participant if necessary.