

LDAC ADVICE

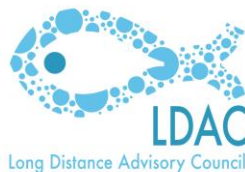
Regional management of small pelagic species in West Africa: implications for the European Union's external action

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Background

1. Small pelagic fish play a vital role in the West African marine ecosystem. Some, such as sardinella and ethmalosa, are essential to food security and the coastal economies of West Africa. Recent scientific work by COPACE/CECAF confirms that several stocks are overexploited and require coordinated management at regional level, a view shared by all coastal states in the region.
2. The LDAC notes that several recent developments within the CSRP are creating more favourable conditions for effective regional coordination of management measures for small pelagics: The 2025 CSRP Ministerial Conference endorsed the principle of regional coordination of national management plans for small pelagics, developed with the support of the FAO and the EAF-Nansen programme, and approved a series of management measures to be implemented across the sub-region.
3. The recent establishment of a CSRP Technical Working Group on small-scale fisheries also demonstrates a growing commitment to strengthening regional cooperation on small pelagics, food security and local value chains. Also, the recent launch of the GEF supported UNDP/SFP GMC2 project shows international interest.
4. Finally, a workshop on management procedures ('harvest strategies') for small pelagic species was recently held at IMROP in Nouakchott and provided an opportunity for CSRP member states to discuss the need to agree on common long-term management objectives for shared stocks and to work on simulating various possible scenarios for fisheries targeting these species.

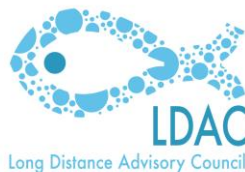


General recommendations

- 1. The LDAC considers that current developments within the CSRP region, combined with the implementation of the WASOP regional programme and ongoing discussions on the future priorities of the European Union's external action after 2027, offer a unique opportunity to strengthen the regional approach to the management of small pelagics in West Africa. This regional approach must, however, support – rather than replace – national responsibilities for fisheries monitoring, data collection, control and the implementation of management measures.***
- 2. In this context, the LDAC calls on the European Union to consider the possibility of developing, together with the relevant coastal states, the competent regional organisations and sector stakeholders, a Team Europe Initiative dedicated to the sustainable management of small pelagics, food security and the livelihoods of coastal communities in West Africa. Such an initiative would help to strengthen coherence between the APPDs, regional scientific programmes, regional fisheries governance mechanisms, investments in local value chains and actions supported under the Global Gateway. Correspondingly the LDAC proposes to the relevant coastal states, the competent regional organisations and sector stakeholders to strengthen their cooperation and coordination structures to meet and cooperate effectively with a Team Europe Initiative.***

Proposals for discussion with a view to specific recommendations

1. Include specific provisions in the region's APPDs aimed at strengthening regional coherence in measures applicable to small pelagics, particularly with regard to harmonised reporting of catches, landings and scientific data.
2. Support the institutional strengthening of the CSRP so that it can play an enhanced role as a regional platform for coordinating management measures for small pelagics, in conjunction with COPACE, the FAO and sectoral organisations.
3. Explore the possibility of developing a regional Team Europe Initiative on small pelagics in West Africa in order to mobilise, in a coherent manner, the various financial, technical and policy instruments of the European Union and its Member States in support of sustainable stock management, food security, climate resilience and the development of local value chains.



4. Use the WASOP programme as a catalyst for a regional approach to coordination between the APPDs, regional scientific initiatives, food security policies and regional management mechanisms for small pelagics.
5. Ensure that operational coordination is strengthened between the relevant European Commission departments involved in the APPDs, WASOP and regional programmes supporting the management of small pelagics in West Africa.
6. Support, in conjunction with COPACE/CECAF, the establishment of a regional mechanism for the compilation, analysis and regular publication of data on total catches of small pelagics, including artisanal, industrial, European and non-European fleets.
7. Through this mechanism, promote the collection, analysis and regular publication of data on flows of fish intended for fishmeal and fish oil, as well as their impact on food security, regional markets and artisanal processing sectors.
8. To support, through sectoral support under the APPDs with countries in the region, the sharing of scientific data and participation in regional research campaigns.
9. Ensure that PPAs continue to support investment in post-harvest infrastructure, conservation, transport and local processing.
10. Explicitly incorporate food security, nutrition, employment, the role of women in artisanal processing and the social impacts on coastal communities into the evaluation criteria for PPAs involving small-scale pelagic fisheries, as well as in any future regional cooperation initiatives supported by the European Union.
11. Support cross-border joint sectoral committees, which bring together fishermen and stakeholders from neighbouring countries to promote a common approach amongst stakeholders from different countries.
12. Encourage the establishment of regional frameworks for dialogue involving government bodies, scientists, professional organisations and civil society to facilitate consultation on management priorities for small pelagic species and the balancing of ecological, economic and social objectives.



13. Develop regional pilot programmes for participatory science involving small-scale fisheries, women in the processing sector and scientific institutes, with a view to improving the collection of socio-economic data and the monitoring of the effects of management measures.
14. Support a regional, open and inclusive forum for discussion of items under 10, 11, 12, and 13.

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