



MINUTES
LDAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Venue: Hotel Martin's Brussels EU
(Bd Charlemagne 80, 1000 Brussels)

Thursday 12 March 2026
14:00 – 16:30 CEST

Chair: Iván López van der Veen
Vice-Chairs: Vanya Vulperhorst, Julio Morón and Marc Ghiglia
Rapporteurs (Secretariat): Alexandre Rodríguez and Manuela Iglesias

1. Welcome by the Chair, Iván López.

The Chair, Mr Iván López, welcomes the members and accredited observers, as well as the other invited experts.

He then presents the justified apologies for the absence of the following members, along with their delegations in the event of a vote:

- Sara Fröcklin (SSNC) delegates to Béatrice Gorez (CFFA-CAPE)
- Xavier Leduc (UAPF) delegates to Michel Goujon (ORTHONGEL)
- Emil Remisz (NAPO) delegates to Tim Heddema (DPFTA)
- Aivaras Labanauskas (LLDFA) delegated to Tim Heddema (DPFTA)

The Chair reports that there is a sufficient quorum (at least half plus one of a total of 23 members) of members present and represented for decision-making.

The full list of attendees can be found in **ANNEX I** of these minutes.

2. Approval of the agenda.

The agenda is approved without amendments.

3. Approval of the minutes of the last Executive Committee meeting (Madrid, 20 January 2026)

The minutes of the previous Executive Committee meeting, held in Madrid on 20 January 2026, are approved without any comments received or changes proposed.

4. Administrative and procedural matters.

4.1. Review of LDAC membership fees (effective from 1 June 2026)

Mr Alexandre Rodríguez, Secretary General, explained the proposal to increase membership fees for LDAC member organisations, based on the significant rise in expenditure due to increased operating costs incurred over the last five years. Mr Rodríguez noted that LDAC fees had remained unchanged since the organisation's creation in 2007. However, over the last four years, the LDAC's annual budget has experienced a structural deficit due to multiple factors, including: the general increase in operating costs (including costs associated with meetings and services and the proliferation of hybrid meetings), and the organisation of additional high-level activities and events not initially foreseen in the annual work programme.

On the revenue side, he reports that there was a decline in real terms in the annual grant from the European Commission compared to pre-COVID figures, as a result of being the first Advisory Council to implement the shift in the funding model towards a lump-sum system. The result was the signing of a four-year framework agreement (1 June 2022 to 31 May 2026) which allowed only a 2% annual inflation increase starting from EUR 273,000, a figure considerably lower than that granted to most other Advisory Councils that joined subsequently. Mr Rodríguez mentioned that the Secretariat is currently negotiating with the European Commission the terms of the new framework agreement, which includes a request for a significantly higher annual amount that is more in line with the budgetary reality and the LDAC's needs in terms of current expenditure levels.

In view of the above, and in order to ensure sufficient income and the financial viability of the organisation in the coming years so as to maintain the LDAC's current level of activity and workload, the Secretariat has put forward two possible proposals for updating membership fees, which can be viewed in the following presentation:

<https://ldac.eu/images/4.1. Updated Secretariat proposal on increase of LDAC membership fees.pdf>

Following a round of comments and discussion amongst the members, it was agreed not to introduce a specific fee for each of the different Working Groups (ranging from 100 to 150 euros) and to replace this with an increase in the fixed General Assembly fee, in order to achieve a more balanced distribution of costs amongst members and to encourage participation in all of them (including the organisation of Focus Groups arising from them).

ACTIONS:

- **At the Chair's request, the Secretariat will email the following proposal to the members of the Executive Committee within two weeks for their approval:**
 - **An annual fee of 800 euros (compared to the current 300 euros) for member organisations of the General Assembly;**
 - **An annual fee of 800 euros (compared to the current 600 euros) for member organisations of the Executive Committee.**
 - **No membership fee shall be charged to Working Groups, as this cost is already included in the General Assembly fees.**

- **Once the consultation period has ended, if no objections are received, the increase in fees for the General Assembly and the Executive Committee will be deemed approved by the Executive Committee and an item will be included on the agenda of the next General Assembly (20 May 2026) for formal ratification.**

4.2. Formal establishment of the LDAC Steering Committee

The Chair, Mr Iván López, reads out the revised draft text aimed at including a new article in the statutes defining the composition, functions and decision-making procedures of the "Steering Committee". This draft can be consulted via the following link:

https://ldac.eu/images/Updated_Proposal_New_Article_Statutes_LDAC_Steering_Committee_24Feb2026.pdf

Following a discussion amongst the members, the following **ACTION** was agreed:

- **To add an item to the agenda of the next Executive Committee meeting for the possible approval of the revised text with a view to its formal ratification by the General Assembly in May in The Hague.**

4.3. Update of the LDAC Code of Conduct and Terms of Reference for Focus Groups (FGs)

The Vice-Chair, Ms Vanya Vulperhorst, suggested updating the LDAC Code of Conduct to include point 8 on how to reflect minority or dissenting positions in opinions.

Regarding point 6.bis proposed by Ms Béatrice Gorez, following a discussion, it was agreed to revise the text of that section.

The document containing both points can be found at:

https://ldac.eu/images/ENG_Draft_Code_of_Conduct_and_Annex_May2024_Proposals_v6M.pdf

The following **ACTIONS** are approved:

- **To approve item 8 for inclusion in the code of conduct, to be ratified by the General Assembly at its next meeting scheduled for May.**
- **Ms Béatrice Gorez and Mr Daniel Voces will jointly agree on a text for section 6.bis.**

4.4. Proposals for collaboration with external partners (scientific and technical advice)

This item was not discussed due to lack of time and is therefore postponed until the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

4.5. Decision by members on the above points

The members' decisions are recorded as actions under each specific item.

5. Request for adoption of draft opinions:

5.1- LDAC draft opinion on the IOTC: tuna stocks, sharks and horizontal issues (WG1)

It is agreed as an **ACTION**:

- **The adoption of the opinion and its submission to the European Commission.**

5.2- LDAC draft opinion on the effects of climate change on fisheries in non-EU waters: the role of sustainable fisheries partnership agreements or SFPA (WG4-WG5)

Agreed as **ACTION**:

- **The adoption of the opinion and its submission to the European Commission.**

5.3- Draft LDAC opinion on: Protocol for the prevention and eradication of harassment on fishing vessels (WG4)

It is agreed as an **ACTION**:

- **The adoption of the opinion and its submission to the European Commission.**

6. Update on the high-level conference on sustainable fisheries agreements.

The Secretary-General, Mr Alexandre Rodríguez, reminds members that the dates for the Congress have been confirmed.

The technical conference will take place on 8 April and will last a full day, in partnership with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), in Brussels. A detailed summary of the event's agenda is then provided.

In addition, it is announced that on 9 April, the LDAC rapporteurs/chairs will present the conclusions of the event at the European Parliament, hosted by the Chair of the Committee on Fisheries, Carmen Crespo.

The following **ACTIONS** have been agreed:

- **The LDAC Secretariat will continue to work alongside the event's organisers (the Canary Islands Regional Government, the Basque Government and the Andalusian Regional Government) and the members of the organising committee on planning the event.**
- **The agenda will be finalised and the final, laid-out and printed version will be sent out.**
- **Members of the Executive Committee will be kept promptly informed of any developments in this regard.**

7. Date and venue of the next Executive Committee meeting. (The Hague, 19 May 2026)

Please be advised that the next meeting of the Executive Committee will take place on Tuesday 19 May 2026 in the Netherlands, at the NH Hotel in The Hague.

The Chair, Mr Iván López, has announced that, due to scheduling conflicts, he will be unable to attend; he has therefore delegated the chairmanship of the Executive Committee meeting (19 May) and the General Assembly (20 May) to the First Vice-Chair of the LDAC, Ms Vanya Vulperhorst, who has expressly accepted this mandate.

Any Other Business (AOB)

Temporary vice-chair of WG1

The Vice-Chair of WG1, Mr Ignacio Fresco (OCEANA), reports that he will be on paternity leave for the coming months. It is unanimously agreed that, until his return, he will be replaced by Mr Raúl García (WWF Spain).

LDAC-MAC dialogue on avenues for collaboration on opinions regarding issues of common interest

Regarding the pending response from the MAC to the LDAC's offer of dialogue to clarify terms of collaboration and mandates on matters of common interest, it was reported that no response has been received as yet.

Closing of the meeting

The Chair thanked the members for their attendance and participation, the team of interpreters and sound technicians for their work, and the Secretariat for the organisation and preparatory work carried out on the documentation.

The meeting is declared closed

ANNEX I: List of attendees
Executive Committee
Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC)
Brussels, 12 March 2026

Participating Members

1. Iván López. AGARBA/CEPESCA
2. Vanya Vulperhorst. OCEANA
3. Raúl García. WWF
4. Despina Symons. EBCD
5. Francisco Mari. BFW
6. Michel Goujon. ORTHONGEL
7. Iris Ziegler. Seas at Risk
8. Julio Morón. AGAC/OPAGAC/CEPESCA
9. Luis Vicente. ADAPI
10. Julien Daudu. EJF (Chair of WG5)
11. Tim Heddema. Pelagic Freezer Trawler Association (Vice-Chair of WG2)
12. Ignacio Fresco. OCEANA (Zoom) (Vice-Chair of WG1)
13. Béatrice Gorez. CFFA-CAPE (Chair of WG4)
14. Ángela Cortina. OPNAPA (Vice-Chair of WG4)

Observers

15. Daniel Voces. EUROPÊCHE (Vice-Chair of WG5)
16. Janne Posti. Conxemar
17. Yago Rosado. OCEANA
18. Carmen Gómez. SGP MAPA – Government of Spain

LDAC Secretariat

19. Alexandre Rodríguez. LDAC
20. Manuela Iglesias. LDAC
21. Marta de Lucas. LDAC (Zoom)