

ANNEX I

WORK PROGRAMME FOR LDAC Year 14

1 June 2020 - 31 May 2021

Background: Legislative framework and transparency initiatives

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 is 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. It is currently made up by 54 member organisations from 12 EU coastal Member States having fleet with presence in the EEZ of third countries, high seas and international waters. 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. Its main goal is to promote the conservation of marine biodiversity and the sustainable use and management of fishing resources outside EU waters.

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>

Mission and objectives

The main goal of the LDAC is to promote the conservation of marine biodiversity and the sustainable use and management of fisheries resources outside EU waters whilst achieving a level playing field and improving the economic competitiveness of EU's Member States fleets. All in a framework of promoting coherence between EU policies which have impacts on the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy.

It also looks for ensuring the fight against IUU fishing, decent labour conditions and social rights at sea compliance of international legal instruments of maritime safety, improving international governance and the transparency, accountability and dialogues with third countries, RFMOs, international institutions and organisations and development of SDGs, between others.

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

As in previous years, the LDAC will continue with its aim of assisting and providing technical advice to the European Commission and Member States in the implementation of the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy, including the screening and critical analysis of the sustainable fisheries partnership agreements between the EU and third countries; and feedback to the EC negotiation teams prior to the annual meetings of regional fisheries management organizations such as NAFO, ICCAT and IOTC. The LDAC will also seek to reinforce its existing partnership with COMHAFAT and strengthen collaboration with FAO and exploring networks with other international organisations such as African Union, or ILO.

The LDAC will also follow closely the developments within the framework of UN organisations in the second half of 2020 and/or 2021 (in light of COVID-19 circumstances many meetings have already been postponed or deferred) in the field of international ocean governance and management of the high seas, in particular the Intergovernmental Conferences on Marine Biodiversity on Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), the UN Ocean Conference on SDG14 and the 15th COP of the CBD.

Core themes

In Year 14, the LDAC intends to provide evidence-based advice to the EU in the field of international ocean governance will focus on:

- The social dimension of the CFP, in particular to decent labor conditions, training and health related to fishing activities. In this field, the LDAC will collaborate with the EU Social Dialogue Committee, DG MARE focal point and DG EMPLOYMENT to align strategies and priorities in relation to adoption and implementation of international instruments of safety at sea;
- Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements with Third (non-EU) Countries, in particular to transparency of decision-making, monitoring and evaluation of agreements; use of sectoral support; the impacts of SFPAs on the marine environment, including the incidental catch of non-targeted species; and the role of women in fisheries in the framework of SFPAs between the EU and third countries to promote gender equality and equity in fisheries and cooperation for development policies.
- Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) where the EU is a contracting or signatory party or has observer status. This work will consist on issuing advice to relevant policy subjects such as:
 - Management Strategy Evaluations / Harvest Control Rules for Stocks
 - Multiannual Fisheries Management Plans outside EU waters
 - Technical conservation measures (including closures and bycatch mitigation measures)
 - Area Based Management Tools including Marine Protected Areas and OECM
 - Conservation of the Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems in the High Sea
 - Fight against IUU fishing
 - Data reporting, with specific focus on Discards/By-Catch rules
- Regional approach to Data Reporting and Monitoring, Control and Surveillance for Tuna and Tuna like Fisheries in RFMOs and High Seas. MCS for the EU external fishing fleet can be also considered here.
- Fight against Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing (IUU): Improving effective implementation of IUU Regulation and SMEFF Regulation;
- Agreements and resolutions for the high seas where the EU long distance fleet operates reached at international organizations (UNGA, BBNJ, CBD, WTO, ILO, FAO...);

Work coordination with the Market Advisory Council (MAC)

The LDAC Secretary will continue attending the Market Advisory Council Meetings following the mandate provided by the LDAC members to act as observer entrusted with coordinating and reporting back on the actions of common interest for both ACs. In particular, it is envisaged to work collaboratively to analyse issues related to level playing field in relation to wild and processed fish products entering into the EU market, including analysis of the legal provisions related to imports, sanitary and health certificates, Fisheries Control Regulation, IUU Regulation and catch certification scheme, sustainable management of the External Fishing Fleet, SFPAs, social and environmental standards, compliance with labour and human rights provisions embedded in EU Trade policy agreements (FTAs, GSP+, EPAs).

Collaboration with the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) in the Annual Economic Report

Participating in expert capacity in STECF EWG 20-03 (AER-1) and 20-06 (AER-2) aimed to fine tune methodology and data analysis and carry out a qualitative assessment of economic data related to Distant Water Fleet (DWF), respectively. The outcomes of this analysis will be included under the DWF/OFR regional chapters of the STECF Annual Economic Report (AER) of the European Fishing Fleets with the view to improve objective knowledge on commercial catches of distant fleet by fisheries and areas as well as accuracy of information on updated social, and economic data related to the EU DWF including a better categorization.

The LDAC Secretariat participated through the Secretary in Year 13 in EWG AER 19-06 (Dublin, 3-7 June) and contributed as rapporteur of the DWF to draft the regional chapters related to ASW, NAFO, NEAFC, ICCAT, IOTC and CECAF. In year 14, this work will continue (COVID-19 permitting) with the view of expanding the analysis not only to reflect outlook and current trends but also future challenges, as well as to display more in detail economic data disaggregated into new areas located within the EEZs of third country waters where there are SFPAs, provided there is sufficient time allotted and adequate expertise and resources within the group.

LDAC PRIORITIES

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.

Process for establishing priorities

Continuing what it was agreed last year, COVID-19 situation permitting, a LDAC delegation will seek to hold an annual coordination meeting with Directors, Heads of Unit, coordinators and staff of DG MARE at the beginning of its financial year (June-July 2020) in order to exchange views and line up work priorities for the coming months in relation to the European Green Deal Communication so they can be dynamic and respond to the needs of the European Commission and Member States thorough the year. The LDAC will subsequently reflect and identify its own initiative priorities that are consistent with the specific tasks and actions to be accomplished by its Working Groups.

Main areas of work for Y14

1- Working on strengthening the role of the EU in the field of International Ocean Governance:

- Assist DG MARE unit of International Governance and negotiators from DG MARE on international processes occurring in 2020-2021 such as:

- UN Intergovernmental Conference for Marine Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ); UNGA Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries;
- UNFSA ICSP-15 Fifteenth round of informal consultations of States Parties to the Agreement, focusing on the topic "Implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management; Resumed Review Conference for the UN Fish Stocks Agreement
- UN Workshop on Review of Bottom Fisheries in the High Seas;
- UN Ocean Conference on Sustainable Development Goal 14;
- COP15 of Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Caveat: The LDAC will cover or follow all the above referred discussions, submitting timely advice and/or sending delegates, whenever it's possible and convenient in light of COVID-19 situation and subject to budget availability to cover the missions of the LDAC representative/s.

- Promote the adoption, ratification and implementation of international instruments of safety at sea, including UN, IMO, ILO and FAO legislative instruments. LDAC will continue working on a road map agreed with the EU Social Dialogue Committee (ETF-EUROPECHE) for 2020-2021 and supporting FAO's consultation to develop a guidance document for social sustainability of the fisheries value chain initially planned to be adopted at the COFI in June 2020. It will continue to make itself available for any event or conference where it is required to promote the benefits of such adoptions.

- Provide advice to effectively implement the EU Joint Communication on International Ocean Governance adopted in 2017 and subsequent report published on 15 March 2019 outlining the progress made on the ocean governance agenda in relation to the 50 actions for safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed oceans in Europe and around the world including marine pollution, ocean research, data and science or fight against illegal fishing.

- Participate in relevant fora such as IOG Forum planned for 9-11 December 2020 in Brussels.

- Assist DG MARE in fulfilling the Headline Ambition of "A stronger Europe in the World", embedded in the mandate given to the new Commissioner for the Oceans, Environment and Fisheries as set in the Commission's Political Guidelines 2019-2024 and EC Work Programme of 2020: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_124

- Foster greater transparency of fishing activities, through SMEFF regulation and non-state / multi stakeholder party initiatives; publication of public and private agreements in third countries where they have SFPAs; enhanced role and participation of EU stakeholders in RFMOs; etc.

2- Collaborating in the fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing:

LDAC will continue its dialogue and engagement with the European Commission (DG MARE) for the review of the EU fisheries control systems to improve coherence in the implementation of the MCS provisions for the distant water fleet embedded in the Control, IUU and SMEFF Regulations; and noting the relevance and added value of involving the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) in cooperation activities on the International Dimension of the CFP.

3- Developing joint initiatives and activities with governmental (ATLAFCO-COMHAFAT) and multi stakeholder (NSP platform to African Union) organisations in the Atlantic façade of Africa participating in different events. In this respect, the LDAC plans to organise jointly with COMHAFAT in late 2020 / early 2021 a high level workshop on Implementation of SFPAs from a third country's perspective: progress and drawbacks) and contemplating the organization of joint side events in international fora.

4- Improving qualitative analysis of DWF in STECF Annual Economic Report:

The LDAC Secretary will continue assisting in expert capacity to the Annual Economic Report (AER) meeting by mandate of the LDAC membership tasked with improving data analysis and qualitative assessment of economic performance of the EU distant water fishing (DWF) fleets, improving the categorisation, methodology and spatial scope via the regional chapters for areas such as NAFO, South West Atlantic, NEAFC, CECAF, ICCAT or IOTC.

5- Providing technical advice to RFMOs within the framework of negotiations in terms of conservation and management measures for stocks of commercial interest and protection of non-targeted species.

The LDAC will prioritise its attention to NAFO, ICCAT and IOTC.

6- Monitoring the implementation of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) and following negotiations and identification of priorities linked to implementation and the renewal of the existing protocols (ex-ante and ex post evaluations). The aim will be to improve transparency, access of information and consistent reporting on use of funds related to sectorial support in third countries, with related socio-economic and environmental assessments of its impact on marine ecosystems, local communities and EU fleets.

7- As previous years and, where possible, in conjunction with the Market Advisory Council, screening from an extractive fishing fleet perspective of Commercial and Trade Agreements: Enhancing Sustainable Development Chapter of EPAs and FTAs negotiations, Implementation of International Law Provisions of GSP+, impact on the promotion of sustainable fisheries, including the establishment of a level playing field for control of imports and traceability in the value chain for EU and non-EU operators.

8- Develop the recommendations formulated in the LDAC performance review part 2, which aims to:

- Perform an external and objective assessment of the work of the LDAC with the EU and international organisations such as ATLAFCO-COMHAFAT, RFMOs (NAFO and ICCAT), FAO and EFCA.

- Identify issues to improve (and suggest proposals for change) current practices on implementing a LDAC Communications Policy and a Public Relations Strategy.

- Analyse and formulate recommendations on how to improve gender equity and equality both within and outside the LDAC, i.e. how the LDAC could help through its advice to promote the inclusion and consideration of this topic within implementation of SFPAs to promoting Policy Coherence for Development.

The LDAC selected BG Consulting to carry out this task, which began in September 2019 and which final version should be launched with a publication by the end of financial year 13 (May 2020) as part of our performance review.

Work planning at Working Group level

The LDAC will discuss topics of relevance and issue proposals and recommendations within the remit of its four working groups. It must be noted that, at a proposal which is prerogative of the LDAC Chair and by subsequent decision by the Executive Committee of 28 November 2019, the formerly existing Working Group 3 (Other RFMOs and High Seas) that used to meet once a year has been dissolved and merged with WG2 to revise and provide a more effective allocation of items and topics across WGs and ExCom. For example, topics related to Southern Atlantic and its demersal RFMOs will be dealt with by WG2, while other topics such as role of fishing investments in third countries will be dealt with by WG5 (Horizontal Issues). Any high level subjects related to international ocean governance and high seas were reallocated to be presented / discussed at an Executive Committee, which from now on will have specific working sessions besides its usual role of adoption of advice. For sake of clarity, the number of the Working Groups will be reduced by one but the actual impact on the budget will be irrelevant as the ExCom will now meet longer and enhance in working sessions.

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

- *International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT):* The LDAC will participate at the Commission's meeting with stakeholders in fall 2020 in preparation of next ICCAT Annual Meeting planned for November 2020 in Turkey. A task force will be set up under the coordination of the Secretariat 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 this year on management of tropical tuna stocks (including bigeye tuna) and sharks (blue shark and shortfin mako), and the reduction of bycatch of non-targeted species. The Secretariat and key members will also attend inter sessional meetings and workshops throughout the year to follow the deliberation process amongst CPCs and scientists.
- *Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC):* The LDAC will provide feedback and aim to submit specific recommendations to the ongoing negotiations and proposals tabled by G16 and other IOTC CPCs on fishing allocations for access to tropical tuna stocks by Coastal States and Flag States. It will also provide advice on specific queries from the EC negotiation team where requested and might develop, under its own initiative, considerations on how to improve data catch reporting and compliance in line with MCS.
- *Partnerships with organisations working in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans:* Continuation of promotion of the initiatives in the field of transparency of fishing activities and projects of collaboration for development of coastal communities in third countries. The LDAC will look proactively at establishing alliances (through MoU or informal agreements) with relevant regional and stakeholder organisations in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean where the LDAC fishing industry and fleets have active presence and investments'.

Working Group 2: North Atlantic Fisheries Agreement and RFMOs

- *Northern Fisheries Bilateral Agreements with UK, Norway, Iceland, Faroe Islands and Greenland:*
The LDAC will invite the negotiating team of DG MARE to follow up their proposals and provide ongoing feedback on the particularities of each agreement including annual fishing opportunities and utilization of the quotas assigned, commercial measures, monitoring of EEA negotiations and fishing regime access to Svalbard. The LDAC will liaise with other concerned ACs to clarify our role and scope regarding new negotiations between EU and UK or trilateral EU-UK-Norway in 2021.
- *North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC):*
 - Follow up on Coastal States consultations.
 - Provide advice on issues other than fishing opportunities such as management of deep-sea species, protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems and review of its effectiveness including impact assessment studies carried out by ICES/OSPAR, etc.
 - Exchange views with ICES (through participation in MIACO, via ADG and Benchmark Workshops and contact with WGDEEP) on how to improve knowledge on biology and management of deep-sea stocks in this Regulatory Area.
 - Invite the European Fisheries Control Agency to explain its work in relation to control strategies and joint deployment plans (JDPs) in the area.
- *Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO):*
The LDAC will participate at the EC preparatory meeting with stakeholders in August 2020 and will setup a task force to develop a fully-fledged advice in due advance to the NAFO Annual Meeting planned for in September 2020 with specific focus on:
 - Implementation aspects of NAFO Performance Review
 - Single stock scientific advice related to setting of fishing opportunities (TACs)
 - Risk based management strategies, notably implementation of MSE for Greenland Halibut and development of a protocol for exceptional circumstances.
 - Harvest control rules and new scientific assessment for 3M Cod
 - Protocol for (voluntary) gear selectivity trials for Cod trawlers in Flemish Cap
 - Procedure for allocation criteria of fishing days and/or quotas for 3M Shrimp beyond 2020
 - Control and enforcement measures
 - Vulnerable marine ecosystems and closed areas – reinforce dialogue and communication between scientists, policy makers and stakeholders to establish common goals and management objectives in assessment of VMEs. The LDAC will actively participate in a workshop to be organised by the Commission sometime in 2020.
 - Ecosystem approach and multispecies stock assessment in 3M (Cod, Redfish, Shrimp)
- *Impact of Brexit in the composition, functioning and competencies of the Advisory Councils:* The LDAC led the Inter AC debate in 2019 on this topic as a result of the recommendations agreed at the Joint AC Workshop organized on 4 December 2018 in Madrid. The report is available here: <http://ldac.ldac.eu/attachment/7b41520d-57ec-440f-949a-12d788ccf653>

Currently, the LDAC is waiting to get clear instructions/guidance from the EU on how the withdrawal agreement will affect to the role and functions of the Advisory Councils.

- For Year 14, the LDAC will resume work with the PELAC, NSAC and the NWWAC Chairs and Secretariats on a Steering Group to reflect on a follow up Joint AC meeting aiming to draft joint recommendations for a common structure and competencies of the ACs in a post-Brexit scenario.

The aim is to be able to provide and channel EU stakeholders' advice to the European Commission in the negotiation process with UK in those areas affecting them.

Working Group 4: Bilateral relations with third countries

▪ *Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs):*

- 1) State of play on the negotiations of SFPA Protocols currently underway (e.g. Mauritania, Cook Islands, Liberia, possibly Madagascar, Mauritius, Gabon and Guinea).
 - Reinforcing environmental (including ecosystem approach, mitigation measures of fisheries adverse impacts, protection of sensitive species and habitats, B2B cooperation on good practices in fisheries), social and economic sustainability of the SFPAs (including increasing benefits for coastal communities and artisanal fisheries)
 - Strengthening partnership through economic governance improvements (discussion by region)
 - Discussion on "fairness" limits for the access payments, in the context of RFMO discussions on Coastal states allocation of quotas.
- 2) Follow up of the implementation of the agreements of the renewed SFPAs (e.g. Morocco, Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, Senegal, Gambia, Sao Tomé, Cote d'Ivoire and Seychelles, including specific cases of issues in relation to management considerations for access to fish surplus as a result of implementation of the protocol and technical annexes. The LDAC will endeavour to report on operators and OIG concerns regarding problems with the implementation of the licensing system, technical measures (seasonal closures, rest times...) or quota (infra/over) utilisation 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 the following aspects by request of the Commission:

- Improvement of embarking rates of partner countries observers and sea farers, working around logistic barriers.
- Implementation of ILO Conventions for partner countries sea-farers employment conditions, providing equivalent level of protections to third country workers.
- Cooperation on training on safety standards

3) Provide EU fisheries stakeholders' perspective and participate in studies and meetings with DG MARE to review implementation challenges of the SFPAs in force based on feedback received from on outcomes presented at Joint Management and Scientific Committee meeting reports.

In Year 14, specific focus will be dedicated to look at adaptations in relations to COVID 19 Crisis consequences and aftermath in Partners countries with the aim to draw lessons for the future in case of disruptions to fish trade/circulation of crews / fish workers due to Public Health major events.

4) Priorities and economic interest and fishing strategies of the long distance fleet in other third countries without SFPAs or with SFPAs that currently do not have an implementing protocol in force in the Atlantic (Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana etc.), Pacific (Kiribati and Solomon Islands) and Indian Oceans (Madagascar, Tanzania, Mozambique and Kenya);

The LDAC will aim at providing an integrated approach and vision of the industry and NGOs on:

- Assessment and advice on specific aspects and elements of bilateral fisheries agreements (e.g. *ex-ante* and *ex post* evaluations, quota allocation, bycatch mitigation measures, technical categories of fishing fleets or use of sectorial support, amongst others);
- Improving communication on SFPAs visibility and role of women in fishing and promoting gender equity and equality in third countries with SFPAs. A particular issue that will continue to be followed by the LDAC is to studying (or even notifying) any potential existing technical, normative and operational barriers related to access to bycatch fish supplies at the Port of Abidjan by Women's Tuna Processors Cooperative in Cote d'Ivoire (Locodjo). Also, this could be used as a template for similar projects.
- Enhanced communication with national Coastal States Administration representatives, industrial and artisanal fishermen organisations, stakeholders and civil society representatives in third countries. Ad-hoc meetings will be organized when necessary to discuss cooperation and foster exchanges on issues arising from the implementation of the CFP in the context of future SFPAs.
- Request for more transparency and good governance in third coastal countries through better access to information and performance of public and private fishing agreements with long distance fleets (e.g. access rights, types of licenses, sectoral support...) and access to information on the work of their governing bodies (Joint Committee, Scientific Committee...).
- Support the development of coherent and comprehensive Regional Ocean Governance for promoting sustainable fisheries in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans, looking at the various EU policies that have an impact on these regions: Fisheries, Cooperation for Development, Environment, Labour, Trade, Health, External Action Service, etc.
- Update and follow up of DG Mare work on the IUU Regulation and its basic role to promote sustainable fishing around the World and the leading role of the EU on the fight of IUU Fishing.
- The annual coordination meeting between LDAC and ATLAFCO-COMHAFAT will be organised in early 2021, with the goals of improving regional cooperation, monitoring, control and surveillance in the ATLAFCO area, including review of current legislative framework and MCS initiatives; strengthening of capacity building in coastal states; harmonization of training procedures and definition of a common core curricula for inspectors; validated protocols for inspections; etc..

Working Group 5: Horizontal matters

- Ensuring on-going stakeholders' participation and continuation in the provision of advice in relation to consultations launched by the EU institutions on key legislative areas in process of revision such as Control System, Fight against IUU, EMFF Regulations and the evaluation of Council Regulation (EC) no. 734/2008 on the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems.

- Providing inputs to follow-up on the progress report published by the European Commission in March 2019 on achievements on the implementation of the EU Joint Communication on International Ocean Governance which sets and agenda for the future of our oceans and is considered as the EU's route map for safe, secure, clean and sustainable managed oceans.
- Providing 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. In Year 14, the LDAC will aim to formulate recommendations together with the EU Social Dialogue Committee based on the two studies of the EU funded Project "Pillars of the Seas" aimed to address issues such as professional training and certification of fishermen (IMO STCW-F) or definition and measurement of fishing capacity by GT and propulsion power ceilings. More information on the Strategy Plan agreed by the LDAC and the EU Social Dialogue Committee for 2019-2020 (probably prorogued to 2021 due to COVID-19) can be found here: <http://ldac.ldac.eu/attachment/fe2bb4ea-aa1b-4857-85bb-1c72e6af2637>
- Working collaboratively with the Market Advisory Council on developing advice in relation to how to ensure level playing field in relation to wild caught, frozen and processed fish products being traded and/or imported into the EU market. This will be done through a legal gap analysis by a Focus Group of several legislative provisions related to imports, compliance with labour and human rights provisions embedded in GSP+, or implementation of the Sustainable Development Chapters of Economic Partnership Agreements and Preferential Trade Agreements for fishing products through case studies and examples with third countries such as Philippines, Vietnam or Thailand as well as regional organisations such as ASEAN.
- Continuing participating in the dialogue and consultation to convey the LDAC views on the FAO guidance document for social responsibility and sustainability in the fisheries value chain.
- Following developments and work progress of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI): <http://fisheriestransparency.org/> inviting them to come to LDAC meetings and present the publication of the first FiTI country reports planned for the end of 2020.

Executive Committee working sessions

- Engaging through dialogues and technical meetings with DG MARE Directorate B on supporting the role of the EU before international organizations in the field of international ocean governance: as an example, the LDAC participated in May 2019 in the 14th Informal Consultations of States Parties to the UN Fish Stocks Agreement themed on the Performance Review of the RFMOs.
- The LDAC will continue assisting the EU with its preparations for their negotiation positions before UN bodies such as:
 - UNGA Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries when called upon by the DG MARE for technical coordination meetings
 - Intergovernmental Conference to negotiate the UNCLOS Implementing Agreement relating to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)
 - Setting of post-2020 Aichi targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

- UN 2030 Agenda of sustainable development goals: Providing an advice on effective implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.
- Presence and participation in relevant international fora planned for 2020 (COVID-19 permitting) such as UN Ocean Conference or FAO COFI.

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

Following instructions from DG MARE, the LDAC wants to report on other sources of funding for transparency and information purposes

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 14, the FarFish project will reach its final milestones, with the project set to be completed by May 2021.

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 as a full partner with its own budget 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 staff time is assigned through time slots in terms of person per month hours fulfilled by the Project Coordinator hired by the LDAC since January 2019 for the duration of the project, under the direct supervision of the Executive Secretary who is the legal and financial responsible for this project with its work non-remunerated and counted for as contribution in kind.

The project will have its second annual meeting during the second semester of 2020, where the final version for the management recommendations (MR2) will be presented.

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 the each of the Case Study (CS) areas and a report on the success of the self-sampling programme (this report is expected to be delivered before the end of 2020).

In summary, by the end of the year 14 (May 2021), Farfish is expected to have reached 19 out of 19 milestones, and 64 out of 64 deliverables.

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. In this respect, there is a full time employed Scientific Officer under the project budget with no impact on the ordinary budget of the LDAC. The limited hours spent by the Executive Secretary as supervisor of the work is accounted for as contribution in kind in line with the EC financial guidelines and rules.

Impact of COVID-19 in finances and organization of work

Due to the current situation caused by outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the disruption caused to the LDAC activity (the 4 Working Group meetings and the Executive Committee scheduled for 24-26 March 2020 have been postponed), there is a risk that they cannot take place before the end of the Y13, i.e. 31 May 2020. The LDAC has tentatively booked the last week of May to have these meeting plus the Annual General Assembly but it might have to be postponed again depending on the global evolution of the pandemic and the recommendations of the Member States, WHO and European Institutions. This means that the LDAC might need to celebrate them during the second half of the year 2020 which corresponds already to the period covered by this Working Programme.

There will be also a budgetary impact that will need to be addressed. In light of the DG MARE application of the annuity principle and the inability to allow allocation of funds from one financial year to another, this situation might create interim distortions as a result of the extra cost of having additional meetings carried over from Y13. The unexpected increase in costs might have an impact and restrict the number of meetings in Y14, together with the representation of the LDAC in relevant international fora.

For year 14, the LDAC staff is looking into IT remote meeting tools assisted by simultaneous interpretation as well as online consultation tools to try to keep up with existing work while coping with potential travel restrictions and tele working practices. The Secretariat has created a dedicated section of the COVID-19 EU and international legislation at the LDAC website –
Link: <https://www.ldac.eu/en/topical/topical-covid-19>.

The Secretariat will continue 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

- **Regular exchange of views on work priorities / development of a multi annual strategy**

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 14 through formal channels such as plenary Working Group and Executive Committee meetings, and written procedures via the mid-term and final report of Year 14, respectively.

In parallel to the annual work programme, the LDAC will also consider to propose to DG MARE to set a multi annual strategic plan with high level objectives and SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound) goals, in line with the recommendation made by the external consultant on the LDAC Performance Review vol. 1 to improve the internal functioning of the organisation. This strategic plan will allow continuity and accountability of work priorities amongst financial years and to monitor progress on the indicators defined for each of the themes indicated. It will also seek to align their long-term objectives to those set in the new Commission's Political Guidelines 2019-2024 (e.g. Green Deal Communication and Headline Ambition for a "*Stronger Europe in the world*").

- **Update of financial guidelines and administrative rules by DG MARE**

In light of the existence of 4 new ACs and the need to revise and update the current rules related to the functioning of the Advisory Rules, it would be welcome that the DG MARE coordination team had a more active role in the strategic planning and reporting of the ACs. For this reason, the Inter AC Secretariats have requested the organization of a workshop to deal with financial and administrative matters. In particular, an update and review of the financial guidelines and the format of the work programme would be of great help.

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.

Organisation of meetings in Brussels and procedure for notification of advice / letters submitted

As previous years, LDAC will continue making its best to minimise travel disruptions for Commission officials and to facilitate their participation by holding its two series of plenary Working Group meetings (generally in March/April and October/November) in Brussels and adjusting the timing of the agendas to speakers' availability on a flexible basis in close dialogue and coordination with AC coordinators in DG MARE.

The Secretariat also commits to notify to the DG MARE on upcoming LDAC advice and letters in order for them to be prepared and able to address these advices within the allotted deadline of 8 weeks. We are open to explore new ideas for improving the communication and engagement of the DG MARE and other Commission experts and officials.

PROVISIONAL PLANNING OF LDAC MEETINGS

Title of the meeting	Date	Place	Issue to be discussed
General Assembly, Executive Committee or Working Groups	June/July 2020	Brussels	Meetings that may be postponed due the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) belonging to Y13 (June 2019-May 2020)
Coordination meeting of LDAC Chairs and Vice Chairs	September 2020 and February 2021	Madrid	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 2020	Brussels	Items related and important for each WG (see above)
Working Group 2	October / Early November 2020	London/Brussels	Items related to WG2 (North Atlantic Fisheries Agreements and RFMOs)
Executive Committee	November / early December 2020	Madrid	Administrative, communication and financial issues. Adoption of letters and advice.
Working Groups 1, 2, 4 and 5	March / April 2021	Brussels	Items related and important for each WG (see above)
Executive Committee	May 2021	To be confirmed	Administrative, communication and financial issues. Adoption of letters and opinions.
General Assembly	May 2021	To be confirmed	Global overview of the AC financial year, work plan and actions, and summary of advices adopted
“Ad-hoc” Focus Group / WGs	During the year (at request of the members and budget depending)	To be confirmed	Topic-based meetings identified as important or relevant by the LDAC members