FISHERIES ORGANISATIONS AND AGREEMENTS

COMPULSORY CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

What are the fisheries agreements?
The EU has exclusive competence for the conservation of marine biological resources, in EU waters and in relation to the international obligations. All these areas are regulated by the common fisheries policy. The EU negotiates, concludes and implements bilateral sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs) between itself and non-EU countries, and pays compulsory annual contributions deriving from its membership of international bodies, including various regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs).

RFMOs are set up to promote the conservation and sustainability of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. Due to its strong presence in all of the world’s oceans, the EU is obliged under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to participate in these organisations. Within the framework of the SFPAs, the Commission maintains a political dialogue on fisheries-related policies with non-EU countries. In addition, the aim is to improve scientific and technical knowledge of relevant fisheries, contribute to the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and foster better global governance of fisheries at the financial and political level.

Specific objectives

- To promote, through active involvement in international organisations, sustainable development for fisheries management and maritime governance in line with the common fisheries policy objectives, and ensure that fishery resources are maintained above or restored to above levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yields.
- To establish, through SFPAs, a legal, economic and environmental governance framework for fishing activities carried out by EU fishing vessels in non-EU country waters, in accordance with other EU policies.

Why is it necessary?

SFPAs. Under this exclusive competence, the Commission negotiates, concludes and implements bilateral SFPAs between the European Union and non-EU countries with the objective of contributing to a regulated framework for the EU’s long-distance fishing fleet while ensuring suitable exploitation of the non-EU countries’ relevant fishery resources and supporting the competitiveness of the EU’s fishing fleet. Sectoral support is devoted to sustainable development of the fisheries sector of the partner countries and to enhancement of their overall fisheries governance capacity.

RFMOs. The Commission pays compulsory annual contributions deriving from the EU’s membership of international bodies. This includes various RFMOs in which the EU has an interest and bodies set up by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, namely the International Seabed Authority and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund also funds (with voluntary contributions) specific actions managed by these organisations, which encourage improvements in scientific and compliance-based conservation measures that bring the fish stock up to and maintain it at maximum sustainable yield levels. In line with the external dimension of the common fisheries policy, the EU will promote better international fisheries and ocean governance and the sustainable management of international fish stocks, and defend EU economic and social interests within these organisations.

Outlook for the 2021–2027 period

The Commission proposed funding for the international dimension of the common fisheries policy, along with the SFPAs, for the next multiannual financial framework.

Budget implementation (in million EUR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executed Commitments</th>
<th>Executed Payments</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>97.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147.9</td>
<td>142.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148.0</td>
<td>144.4</td>
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</tbody>
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Annex 3 – Programme performance overview

### Key performance indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>PROGRESS TO TARGET</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of SFPAs in force</td>
<td></td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>On track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of EU vessels with fishing possibilities - tuna</td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;100%</td>
<td></td>
<td>120</td>
<td>On track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of EU vessels with fishing possibilities - mixed</td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;100%</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>On track</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where are we in the implementation?

Both commitment appropriations and payment appropriations reached nearly full execution of the total financial allocation for the 2014-2020 period. This is due to the timely signing of all SFPAs, in line with the budget forecasting. The limited delays in the implementation, mainly relating to payments of sectoral support, are dependent on the progress of implementation by the non-EU countries.

### Performance assessment

#### Sustainable fisheries partnership agreements

- With a total of 12 SFPAs currently in place and the prospect of renewing or concluding new SFPAs, the target objective of having 16 protocols in place in 2024 should be achieved.
- The number of fishing opportunities for 2020 is currently relatively stable and in line with the numbers observed over the previous years.
- In addition, SFPAs have been contributing to the development and improved management of the fisheries sectors in the partner countries, including governance based on scientific evidence. A significant portion of the total EU budget for SFPAs has been devoted to projects relating to control and surveillance capacities, small port infrastructures, landing facilities and laboratories and equipment for small-scale fishermen.
- At the same time, SFPAs contribute to eliminating illegal fishing and providing good framework conditions for local fishers. SFPAs therefore also contribute to ensuring food security for local coastal communities. Concrete projects financed include the reinforcement of the sanitary control capacity in ports, landing facilities with storage and ice facilities, financing the acquisition and maintenance of patrol boats, and training of fisheries inspectors and observers.

#### Regional fisheries management organisations

- Overall, the EU has remained the key driver of progress in RFMOs and of improving their performance with concrete proposals. The EU’s voluntary contributions (funded under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund) to scientific advice for RFMOs has had a key impact on several RFMOs.
- The Commission continued to deliver on its commitment to achieving more sustainable fisheries worldwide: 88% of all conservation measures adopted in 2019 by RFMOs of which the EU is a member were in line with scientific advice. The 2020 target of 100% could not be achieved; the rate for that year was 74%. This outcome can be accounted for by the impact of the pandemic on the work of RFMOs and the fact that decisions are taken by consensus.
- There are currently procedures for listing illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in place in all RFMOs. In addition, an increasing number of RFMOs have cross-listing procedures and/or specific provisions to address the responsibility of nationals involved in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.
- The main drawback of RFMOs is that consensus is required in their decision-making procedures and the EU is not the only actor involved. Other drawbacks identified are the lengthy procedures for the identification and implementation of projects, along with the delays in the reporting by RFMOs. Additionally, the COVID-19 outbreak forced many RFMOs to postpone their annual meetings in 2020 and move them to a virtual format, and limit the agendas to decisions essential for the functioning of the organisations. As a result, no further progress could be achieved in 2020.
- The Commission will continue to advocate the adoption of catch-documentation systems for high-value species in all RFMOs in order to promote the establishment of marine protected areas or fisheries restricted areas, and is continuously improving the management of fish-aggregating devices used in tuna fisheries.

### Concrete examples of achievements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>74%</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>15 000</th>
<th>70%</th>
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<tr>
<td>of conservation measures adopted by RFMOs for the management of the fish stocks under their purview were in line with scientific advice.</td>
<td>out of 20 tuna and tuna-like stocks targeted by the EU fleet were fished at a sustainable level and one is on its way to being fished sustainably.</td>
<td>jobs created and maintained thanks to SFPAs in the EU (6 000 directly, 9 000 indirectly).</td>
<td>of the tuna catches made under the umbrella of SFPAs are processed in a partner country.</td>
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