

ANNEX I

WORK PROGRAMME FOR LDAC Year 13

1 June 2019 - 31 May 2020

Background: Legislative framework, mission and objectives

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 fishing 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 recognised as organisations 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 52 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 organisations 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 Organisations – more info on <http://www.uia.org/yearbook>

As previous years, the LDAC will continue with its aim of assisting and providing technical advice to the European Commission and Member States in the field of the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy, including the implementation 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 key regional fisheries management organizations such as NAFO or ICCAT. The LDAC will also seek to reinforce its existing partnership with COMHAFAT and establishing networks with other international organisations such as FAO, IOC or ILO.

The LDAC will also follow closely the developments within the framework of UN organisations in the field of international ocean governance and management of the high seas, in particular BBNJ process and CBD.

In Year 13 LDAC also wishes to keep special attention on aspects related to social dimension and labour issues related to fishing and has developed a specific Strategic Plan for 2019-2020 together with the members of the EU Social Dialogue Committee (namely Europeche and ETF).

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

In summary, the core topics where the LDAC is expected to provide evidence-based advice in Year 13 will be:

- Sustainable Fisheries and Partnership Agreements with Third (non-EU) Countries
- Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) where the EU is a contracting or signatory party or has observer status;
- Regional approach to MCS for Tuna and Tuna like Fisheries (ICCAT, IOTC, COMHAFAT...);

Fight against Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing (IUU): Improving effective implementation of EU IUU Regulation / SMEFF Regulation / Review of Fisheries Control Systems;
- Agreements and resolutions for the high seas reached at international organizations in whose waters the EU long distance fleet operates (UNGA, BBNJ...);
- Policy developments in global fora, such as the UNGA, FAO, WTO, ILO...
Development of specific proposals on core policy subjects at RFMO level such as:
 - Definition of Management Strategy Evaluations / Harvest Control Rules for Stocks
 - Multiannual Fisheries Management Plans outside EU waters
 - Technical conservation measures (including closures)
 - Marine Protected Areas and Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems
 - Fight against IUU fishing
 - Discards/By-Catch rules

The LDAC will keep working with PELAC and NWWAC on issues of common interest such as management of North Atlantic fisheries or review of the functioning of the ACs in light of the withdrawal of the UK from the EU (also known as the “Brexit” process).

The LDAC Secretariat will continue attending the Market Advisory Council Meetings in an observer capacity to coordinate the actions of common interest. In particular, it is envisaged to work collaboratively on a joint task force 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, compliance with labour and human rights provisions embedded in SGP+, or looking at gaps on the Sustainable Development Chapters of Economic Partnership Agreements and Preferential Trade Agreements for fishing products.

Administrative and procedural matters

The LDAC will hold a new round of elections for the appointment of the LDAC Chair, Vice Chairs and the 25 members of the Executive Committee at its General Assembly in Poland on 23 May 2018.

The term of mandate for each of these position will be of three years, starting on 1/6/2019 (beginning of Year 13) and ending on 31/05/2022.

Following a commitment acquired by the LDAC Chair and Secretary following a proposal made at the Coordination Meeting between the EC and the ACs on December 2017, the LDAC hired an external consultant to carry out in Year 12 a performance review of the internal functioning of the LDAC Working Groups, as well as an analysis of the fulfilment of the annual work programme, the compliance with the rules of procedure in terms of consultation and inclusion of comments, production and quality of advice and other topics such as engagement and representation of the members by categories (fishing sector/other groups of interest) and the transparency and participation, amongst others.

The final report was completed on January 2019 and the approved final version will be published and officially released at the LDAC General Assembly in May 2019 with a view of continuing this work in Year 13. An update is also expected to be presented at the inter AC meeting in the 2nd half of 2019.

The document can be found at:

<http://ldac.ldac.eu/attachment/9c02d356-1a6e-4fc5-9332-f33a00c7d2a9>

PRIORITIES

As a result of a meeting held between LDAC delegates and DG MARE representatives on 29 March 2019, it was agreed to hold an annual coordination meeting every year prior to the submission of the annual work programme in order to exchange views and line up work priorities for the coming months. This exercise is expected to improve the understanding and strengthen the communication between both organisations. The LDAC will however identify its own initiative priorities that are consistent with the specific tasks and actions to be accomplished by its Working Groups (see above).

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. It also looks for ensuring decent labour conditions at sea and compliance of international legal instruments of maritime safety.

To develop this goal, the LDAC will work in Y13 on a number of areas identified by its members as follows:

1- Working on promoting the adoption, ratification and implementation of international instruments of safety at sea, including UN, FAO COFI and ILO legislative instruments (e.g. ILO 188 and related provisions on Fishing Labour; EU Directive on Social Partnership Dialogue; IMO STWC-F, Torremolinos Convention and Cape town Agreement) through regular advice and work with the EU Social Dialogue Committee and participation at FAO consultation on social sustainability of the fisheries value chain..

2- Fighting against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, including dialogue and engagement with the European Commission (DG MARE) and the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) for the review of the EU fisheries control systems to improve implementation of the Control, IUU and SMEFF Regulations.

3- Promoting leadership of the EU on International Ocean Governance and enhancing the role of fisheries in the context of the Blue Growth Economy and an Integrated Maritime Policy. Implementation of EU Communication on International Ocean Governance and subsequent progress report; Fulfillment of Sustainable Development Goal 14 in relation to other SDGs and 2030 Agenda; Following the UN process on a Convention for Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) process. Liaising with DG DEVCO to be informed regularly on EU funded projects on improving regional fisheries governance, value chain analysis, sustainable management of fish stock for local communities and ecosystem based approach and MCS (e.g. FISGOV2, ECOFISH, ACP projects, PESCAO...).

4- Contributing to EU policy coherence between fisheries and other EU policies (i.e. cooperation for development, trade, environment, health and food safety, labour) to ensure the result of all EU policies is the promotion of sustainable fisheries and level playing field between EU and non-EU operators (as per TFEU art 208).

5- Developing joint initiatives and activities with our partner organization in the Atlantic façade of Africa (ATLAFCO-COMHAFAT) in the field of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) through regional observer programmes at sea and regional control port scheme, fight against IUU fishing and maritime piracy, implementation and transparency of SFPAs and improving science for evaluation of fish stocks within the EEZs of the African Coastal States and CECAF area for determination of surplus.

6.- Improving transparency and good governance in decision-making in fisheries management through dialogues with organisations in the Atlantic (e.g. African Union-IBAR for the East Atlantic) or the Indian Oceans (IOC/IOTC), respectively.

7- Assisting DG MARE in improving data analysis of economic performance of fishing fleets through active participation and input into STECF Annual Economic Report for 2019.

8- Providing technical advice within the framework of negotiations in terms of conservation and management measures for stocks of commercial interest in the following RFMOs: NAFO, NEAFC, ICCAT and IOTC.

9- Following up on the development of the new modality of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) and monitoring renewal of the existing protocols (ex-ante and ex post evaluations), as well as improving transparency, access of information and consistent reporting on use of funds related to sectorial support in third countries.

10- In conjunction with the Market Advisory Council, screening 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.

Work planning at Working Group level

The LDAC will discuss topics of relevance and issue proposals and recommendations within the remit of its five (both area-based and topic-based) working groups:

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 preparatory meeting with stakeholders foreseen for October 2019 and setup a task force composed of key operators and NGOs, with the coordination of the Secretariat, to prepare an advice focused on Atlantic stocks, in particular this year on management of tropical tuna stocks and sharks (blue shark and shortfin mako) prior to the ICCAT Annual Meeting to be held in Curacao on November 2019.
- Developments by the European Parliament and EU Council based on EC proposal of Regulation on Review of the EU Control Systems: the LDAC will provide its advice to the Commission on areas such as new Monitoring, Control and Surveillance measures, sanctioning regime, international role of EFCA and strategies for a more effective implementation of the Control, IUU and SMEFF Regulations at both national and international level.
- Continuation of promotion of the transparency initiatives and active search of alliances and partnership with organisations in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean where the LDAC fishing industry and fleets have active presence and investments, and to foster projects of collaboration for development of coastal communities in third countries.

- Reinforcement and harmonisation of the control effectiveness of the management measures in force at the different RFMOs and coordination between them for a common approach regarding to fight against IUU fishing, fleet capacity, management of FADs, discards provisions, etc.
- Discussion on the approach and proposals of the European Union for the tuna RFMOs in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans, as well any aspects related to the “Kobe-like” inter RFMO process, with specific focus on identification of good practices in the use and management of Fish Aggregated Devices (FADs) by the EU tuna purse seine fleets.
- 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.

Working Group 2: North Atlantic Fisheries Agreement and RFMOs

- Follow up and ongoing feedback on the Northern Fisheries Bilateral Agreements with Norway, Iceland, Faroe Islands and Greenland including annual fishing opportunities, Monitoring of EEA negotiations and fishing regime access to Svalbard.
- 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, scientific work for stock assessments, 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 EC preparatory meeting with stakeholders in August 2019 and will setup a task force to develop a fully-fledged advice in due advance to the NAFO Annual Meeting to be held in Bordeaux in September 2019 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
 - Control and enforcement measures
 - Vulnerable marine ecosystems and closed areas.
 - 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 organized and coordinated a Joint AC Workshop on this topic on 4 December 2018 in Madrid. The report of the meeting is available: <http://ldac.ldac.eu/attachment/7b41520d-57ec-440f-949a-12d788ccf653>

- For Year 13, the LDAC will continue working jointly with the PELAC 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 3: Other Regional Fisheries Organisations and high seas not covered by a RFMO

- Follow up of work of other RFMO, mainly non-tuna and conservation ones in the Atlantic, Indian, Pacific and Antarctic Oceans, namely SEAFO, SIOFA, CCAMLR, NPRFMO, SPRFMO...
- Atlantic South West (FAO Area 41): The LDAC will follow up the proposals for improving governance on this area and achieving further regulation under the umbrella of an RFMO or other arrangements. It will also continue discussions on topics such as the prohibition of transshipments in the high seas, the protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems in accordance with UN Resolution 61/105, or developing a regional approach to ensure more effective means of control and management of fisheries capacity in the area (e.g. through VMS satellite tracking of vessel position and cross-check verification with AIS or EMS), amongst others.
- Promoting sustainable and transparent European fishing investments in third countries as an element of the External Dimension of the CFP, identifying the relevant supporting legislative provisions and highlighting examples of best practices. The LDAC Secretariat has been given a mandate in Year 13 to develop a concept note and a questionnaire to carry out an study to quantify and showcase the social and economic returns and benefits of such investments both for the local communities of third countries and to ensure supply of fish products to the EU market in accordance with SDGs 2, 3, 8, 14 and 16.

Working Group 4: Bilateral relations with third countries

- Monitoring and exchange of views with the European Commission at LDAC meetings on:
 - 1) State of play on the negotiations for the upcoming negotiations of SFPA Protocols with Mauritania, Senegal and Seychelles.
 - 2) Follow up of the implementation of the agreements of the recently renewed SFPAs with Morocco, Cabo Verde and Guinea Bissau, including management considerations for access to fish allocated surplus within the different modalities and the use of sectoral support.
 - 3) Review of implementation challenges of the SFPAs in force through regular reports on outcomes of Joint Management and Scientific Committee meetings between the European Commission and third countries such as Cote d'Ivoire or Mauritius.
 - 4) Priorities and economic interest and fishing strategies of the long distance fleet in other third countries with or without SFPAs in the Atlantic (Liberia, Ghana, Gabon, etc.), Pacific (Cook Islands, Kiribati...) and Indian Oceans (Mauritius, Madagascar...);

5) Implementation of the new EU Sustainable Management of External Fishing Fleet (SMEFF) Regulation, including reporting and compliance by all EU MS of requisites and supporting documentation regarding legal and sustainable fishing fisheries in the high seas and private direct fishing agreements between the long-distance fleet and non-SFPA countries; and monitoring and analysis of the EU public database; amongst others.

The LDAC will provide 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, technical categories of fishing fleets, use of sectorial support, or aspects related to gender balance, amongst others);
- Enhanced communication with national Administration representatives, industrial and artisanal fishermen organisations, stakeholders and civil society representatives in third countries.
- 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...).
- Ad-hoc meetings will be organized when necessary to discuss issues arising from the implementation of the CFP reform in the context of future sustainable fisheries agreements.
- Support the development of coherent and comprehensive regional or sea basin fisheries strategies 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.
- The annual coordination meeting between LDAC and ATLAFCO-COMHAFAT will be organised in early 2020, 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 and methodology for data collection and reporting.
- Keep collaborating with the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) in the international dimension of fisheries via participation and input at the Advisory Board meetings and inviting them at LDAC Working Group and Focus Group meetings where relevant.

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 (European Commission and the Council of Ministers of the EU) on key legislative areas in process of revision such as Control System, Fight against IUU or EMFF Regulations.
- Providing recommendations on 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 13, the LDAC will aim to formulate recommendations together with the EU Social Dialogue Committee based on the 2 first 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: <http://ldac.ldac.eu/attachment/fe2bb4ea-aa1b-4857-85bb-1c72e6af2637>
- Work collaboratively with the Market Advisory Council on developing a joint/coordinated 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 SGP+, 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
- Participating in expert capacity in STECF EWG to refine methodology and data analysis of Distant Water Fleet (DWF) that 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 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 Secretary participated in Year 12 in EWG AER 18/02 and contributed as rapporteur of the DWF to draft the chapters related to ASW, SEAFO, NAFO, NEAFC, ICCAT, IOTC, CECAF and Other Fishing Regions. In year 13, this work will continue 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.
- 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: in particular, the LDAC participated in Year 12 in a UN Conference to the Parties on the Performance Review of the RFMOs and will continue assisting the EU with its presence and participation in fora such as Our Ocean or FAO Dialogues and Workshops. Providing an advice on effective implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development) of the UN 2030 Agenda.

- Inform the EU on the negotiation process of the UN Biodiversity Conservation in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) and also follow the evolution of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) process and setting of post 2020 Aichi targets.
- Participating in the FAO dialogue meetings and online consultation platform to provide the LDAC views to develop technical guidelines for social responsibility and sustainability in the fisheries value chain.
- Developing a position paper in relation to 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.
- Following developments and work progress of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI): <http://fisheriestransparency.org/>

Overview / Additional Remarks

The LDAC aims to work proactively on contributing to the promotion of 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. It will also look at how to provide input to improve knowledge basis by providing scientific and technical expertise to the European institutions channelling its proposals through interactions at multiple levels.

Following the recommendations made at 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. We will also report on work progress with regard to the deliverables and milestones achieved during Year 13 through formal channels such as plenary Working Group and Executive Committee meetings, and written procedures via the mid-term and final report of Year 13, respectively.

EU H2020 FarFish Project:

Regarding other sources of funding for information purposes only in this report, the LDAC is a partner of the EU H2020 project FARFISH which commenced in June 2017 and will run for a period of 4 years until 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 a SFPAs or in international waters. The project builds on a multidisciplinary expertise of the project consortium, where scientists, IT companies, universities and stakeholders will work together to develop Responsive Fisheries Management System (RFMS) with focus on six case studies: Mauritania, Senegal, Cabo Verde, Seychelles, South East (SEAFO FAO 47) and South West Atlantic (FAO 41).

The LDAC is involved in the project as a full partner and it will be an active contributor to Work Packages 1 (stakeholder interaction), 4 (development of management plans), 5 (evaluation and implementation of management plans), 6 (development of management tools) and 7 (capacity building and dissemination), with assigned time slots in terms of person per month hours that will be fulfilled by the Project Coordinator hired by the LDAC since January 2019 for the duration of the project.

In Year 13, the FarFish project will enter its second loop, starting in June 2019. The loop will commence after reaching the seventh milestone, which is to have the audit of the first version of the management recommendations completed.

The project will have its second annual meeting in June, where the educational programs will be launched (university-level diploma and post-graduate training, milestones 8 and 9). After the meeting, the second general guidelines for making MRs will be made publicly available (milestone number 10).

The LDAC will be involved in 11 out of a total of 20 deliverables to be made available from WPs 1,2,3,4 and 7. The list of deliverables includes the second MR invitation for the Case Studies, a second pilot version of the fisheries database and a second annual report, to be done before September 2019, and a report on the success of the self-sampling programme, to be delivered before May 2020.

Work on WP4 will be done during this year in order to achieve the publication of a second MR for each CS by summer 2020.

In summary, by the end of the year 13 (May 2020), FarFish is expected to have reached 12 out of 19 milestones, and 41 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.

OTHER ISSUES OF INTEREST

The LDAC envisages continuing in Year 13 with its process of internal performance review. In year 12 the following aspects were analysed: the organisation and functioning of WGs, the decision-making process and quality considerations linked to production of advice, in Year 13 other aspects covered could be evaluated, for instance, the performance of the LDAC chairs and secretariat; the cooperation and working practices with international organisations where the LDAC is present or has established professional networks such as RFMOs, FAO, EFCA or COMHAFAT, among others things, and finally communication policy outreach.

We would like to highlight the importance of the role of the AC coordinators team in DG MARE, and we ask to increase the profile of this position, 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 response from the concerned colleagues without unnecessary work overload. Also to be present at key GA/Executive Committee meetings to clarify administrative, budgetary and procedural matters and to assist in informing policy decisions when required. The role of the coordinators should therefore not be under estimated, as they have to look after the needs of 11 ACs.

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 and October) in Schuman-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 will also 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.

The LDAC will also look to be present at the next Our Oceans Conference that will be held in Norway in November 2019, and might also consider starting with the preparation in Year 13 to organise a side event in Year 13 the next FAO COFI scheduled for July 2020.

PROVISIONAL PLANNING OF LDAC MEETINGS

Title of the meeting	Date	Place	Issue to be discussed
Coordination meeting of LDAC Chairs and Vice Chairs	September 2019	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 2019	Brussels	Items related and important for each WG (see above)
Working Group 2	October/ November 2019	London/Brussels	Items related to WG2 (North Atlantic Fisheries Agreements and RFMOs)
Executive Committee	November / December 2019	Madrid	Administrative, communication and financial issues. Adoption of letters and advice.
Working Groups 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5	March/April 2020	Brussels	Items related and important for each WG (see above)
Executive Committee	May 2020	Berlin	Administrative, communication and financial issues. Adoption of letters and opinions.
General Assembly	May 2020	Berlin	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)	To be confirmed	Topic-based meetings identified as important or relevant by the LDAC members (budget depending)