

A New Generation of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs)

Brainstorming session at the LDAC

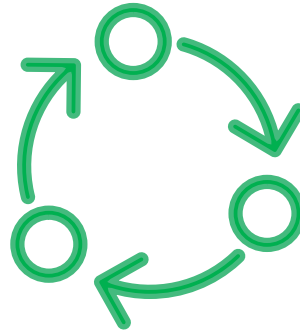
11 March 2025

Meeting agenda and objectives

**State of play of
SFPAs**



**SFPAs in an
evolving context**



**Future generation
of SFPAs**





SFPAs state of play and evolving context

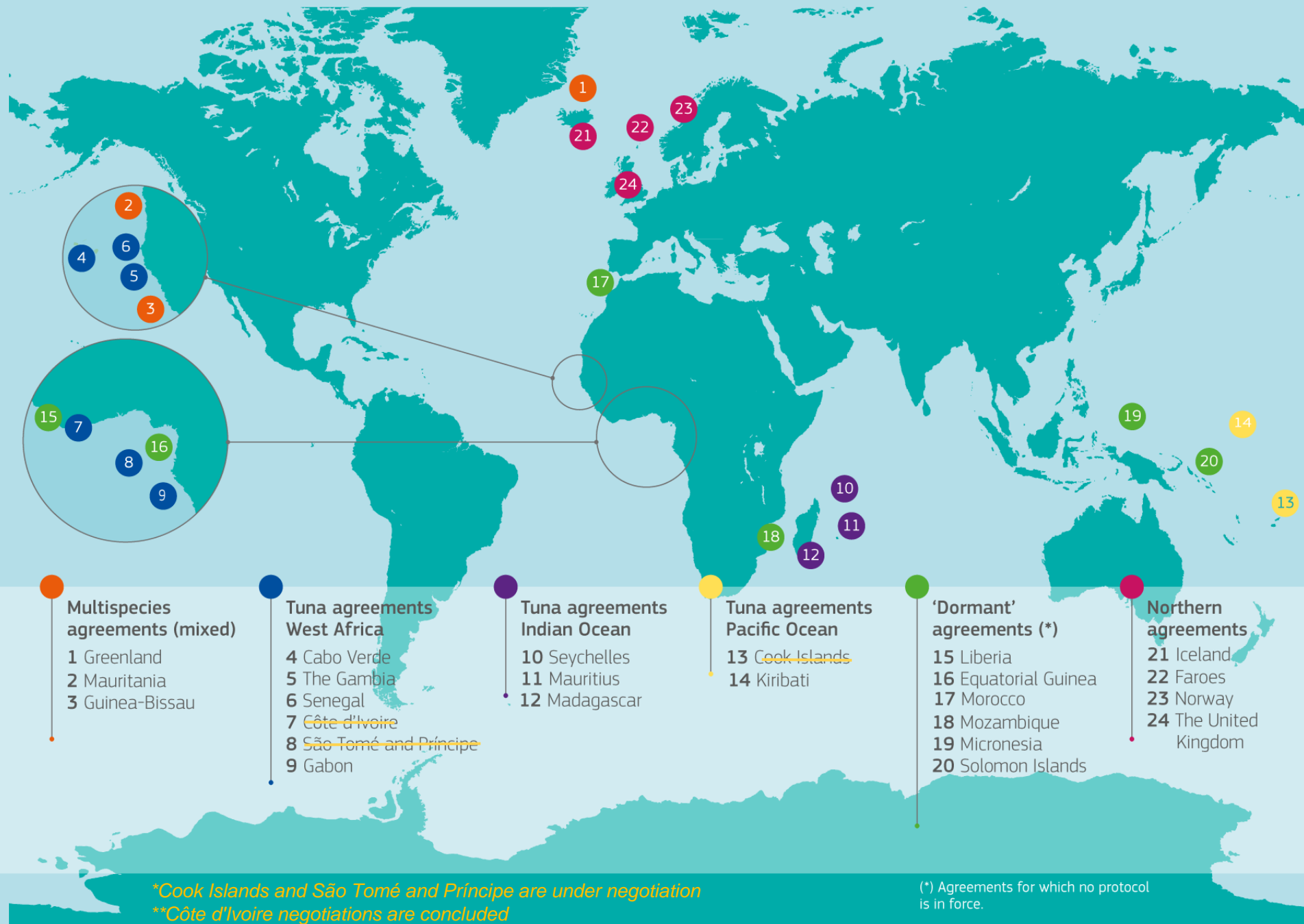


General objectives of the SFPAs

Council Conclusions regarding the External Dimension of the CFP, 19 March 2012

1. To contribute towards **resource conservation and environmental sustainability** through **rational and sustainable exploitation** of living marine resources of the coastal state
2. To contribute to continuing the **activity of the Union fleets** and the employment linked to the fleets operating within the SFPAs
3. To support the **development of a sustainable fisheries sector** in Partner countries





Resource conservation and rational exploitation

Tuna agreements



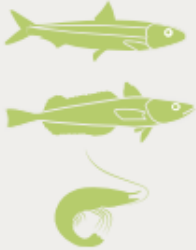
Tuna agreements allow EU vessels to catch different species of large tuna, as they migrate along the shores of Africa and through the Indian Ocean, using purse seines, pole and line, and long surface lines.

- ✓ Effective in ensuring application of RFMOs Management measures
- ✓ Effective in applying ecosystem measures

Tuna species	Fishing pressure indicator	Biomass indicator	Stock status indicator
Atlantic Ocean			
Skipjack (Eastern stock)	Green	Green	Green
Yellowfin	Green	Green	Green
Bigeye	Red	Red	Red
Albacore (North Atlantic stock)	Green	Green	Green
Indian Ocean			
Skipjack	Green	Green	Green
Yellowfin	Green	Green	Green
Bigeye	Red	Green	Yellow
Albacore	Red	Green	Yellow

Resource conservation and rational exploitation

Multi-species agreements



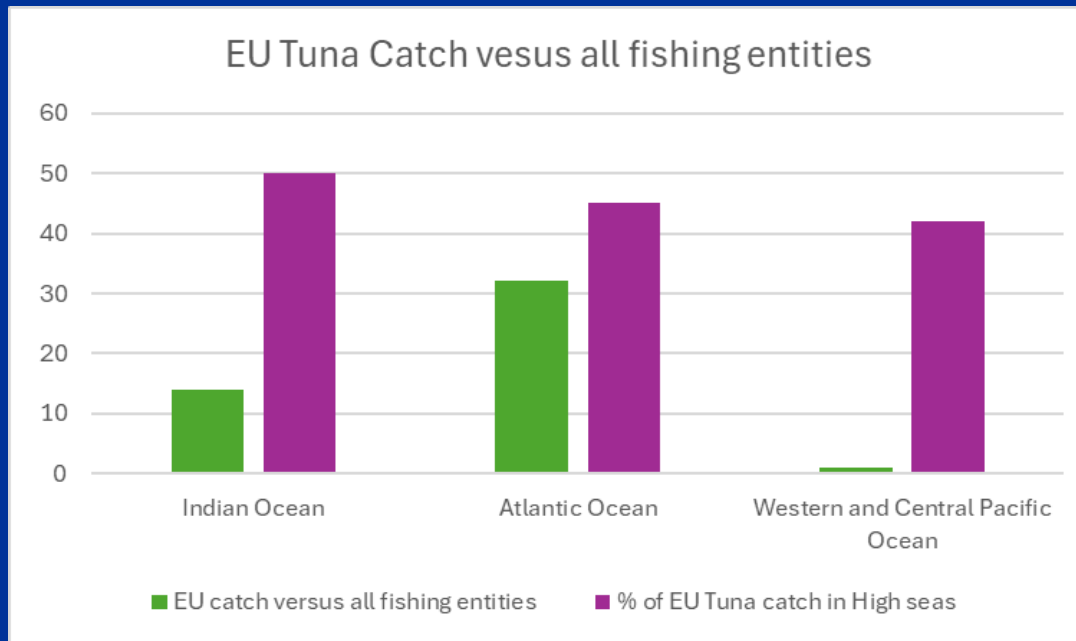
Multi-species agreements allow EU vessels to catch a wide range of fish in the partner countries' fishing grounds, including small pelagics like pilchard, or demersal species like hake, shrimp and flatfish, and mainly involving trawlers, purse seiners and longliners.

- ✓ Lack of relevant scientific data
- ✓ Ecosystem approach not implemented
- ✓ High level of unwanted catch

Results for small pelagic fisheries by the CECAF north sub-group

Species (<i>Scientific name</i>) – Distribution area	2024 assessment (including 2023 data)	EU catch in 2023	EU catch 21-24
Sardine (<i>S. pilchardus</i>) – Zone C (subregion North)	OVEREXPLOITED	1 124	17 710
Chub mackerel (<i>Scomber colias</i>) – Whole subregion North	FULLY EXPLOITED	3 865	9 531
Cunene horse mackerel (<i>Trachurus trecae</i>) – Whole subregion North	FULLY EXPLOITED	0	0
Horse mackerel (<i>Trachurus trachurus</i>) – Whole subregion North	OVEREXPLOITED	53 999	115 526
Round sardinella (<i>S. aurita</i>) – Whole subregion North	OVEREXPLOITED	448	1 037
Flat sardinella (<i>S. maderensis</i>) – Whole subregion North	OVEREXPLOITED	0	0
Bonga (<i>Ethmalosa fimbriata</i>) – Whole 1ubregión (Mauritania+Senegal+Gambia)	OVEREXPLOITED	0	0

Continuity of the EU fishing fleet activity



Partner third country

% EU catch vs total catch in national waters

Morocco

6% for total catch (all species included)

7% for demersal fish species

5% for small pelagic species

Mauritania

9%-12% for total catch (all species included)

10% for small pelagic species

11%-27% for demersal fish species

60-75% for crustacean species

Guinea-Bissau

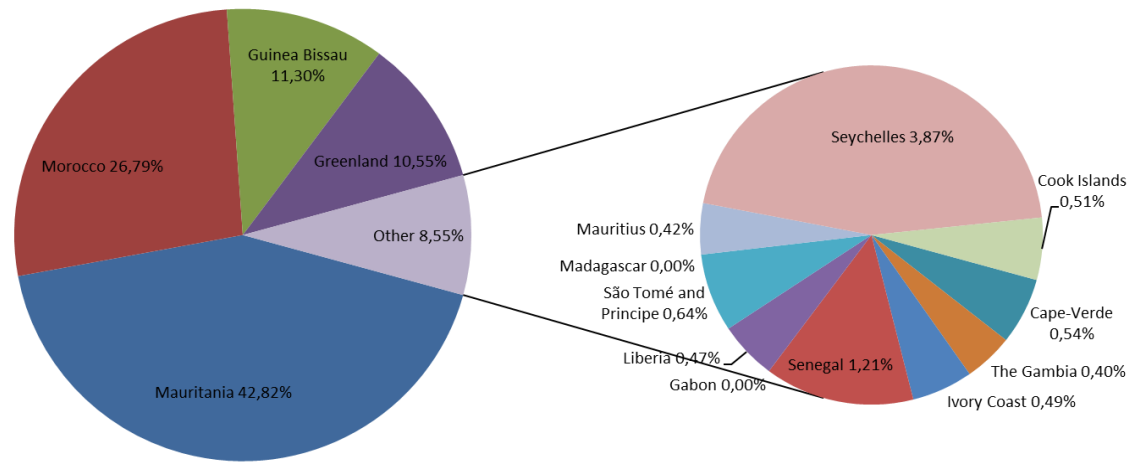
14 % for total catch (all species included)

15%-20% for demersal / cephalopods species

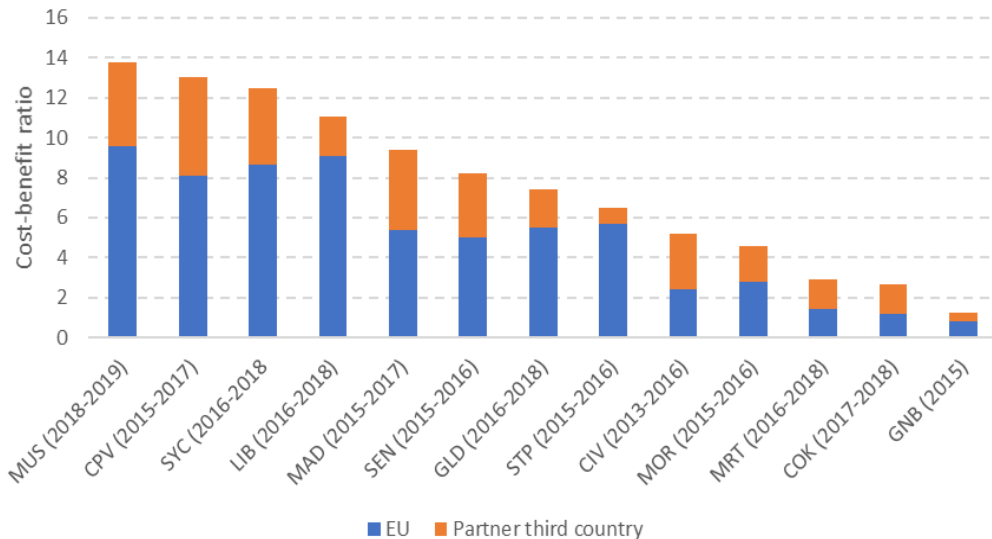
≈ 50% for crustacean species



Total UE contribution (annual average of 159 Million EUR)



Cost-benefit ratio of the EU investment in the contribution for access



Support the development of a sustainable fisheries sector

Economic Value

✓ EUR 477 million per year

EUR 232 million of economic value-added for the EU and EUR 245 to partner countries

Every 1 EUR invested by the EU in the financial compensation for access supporting the creation of EUR 5.13 economic value added benefiting to the fisheries sectors of the EU and of the partner third countries.

Total jobs created

- ✓ Around 6,500 jobs linked to EU fishing operations
- ✓ Includes 3,650 EU nationals and 2,850 third-country national

Indirect Jobs

- ✓ Around 15,000 jobs in processing, 9,000 for women



Conclusions of the SFPA evaluation (2015-2020)



Strengths

- ✓ Relevant tool to address the needs and objectives of the relevant stakeholders (EU, owners of EU fishing vessels and partner countries)
- ✓ Positive contributions of SFPAs to build capacity of partner countries for monitoring, control and surveillance
- ✓ SFPAs were broadly effective in enhancing the capacity of partner countries to monitor and control fishing activities, with a positive contribution to the global fight against IUU fishing.



Areas for improvement

- ✓ Review of dormant SFPAs
- ✓ Adaptation of the EU financial contribution for access in a context of a reduced level of exploitation of fishing opportunities
- ✓ Improved monitoring of the application of the non-discrimination and transparency clauses
- ✓ Strengthening of the scientific capacities and data collection
- ✓ Improved transparency and communication



What is our conclusion?

SFPAs are fit for purpose and important:

Provide access for
the EU fleet to
third countries'
EEZ

Contribute to
better international
ocean governance

Promote the
sustainable
development of
fisheries sector in
partner countries

With areas for improvement.





Shaping a future generation of SFPAs





Commissioner Costas Kadis

Mission letter

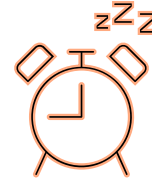
*You will work on **a new generation of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements**, ensuring they are in line with our wider regional strategies and priorities, most notably for Africa and the Indo-Pacific. You will promote a coherent approach for sustainable fisheries in all multilateral fora and bilateral dialogues.*



Areas to consider in the **new generation of SFPAs**:



Sustainability of SFPAs and implementation of surplus



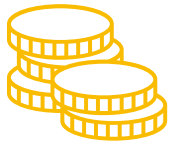
Existence of dormant agreements



Challenges in ensuring a level playing field and transparency



Perception of EU fleet and EU's role in global fisheries and ocean governance



Structure of the financial contribution in SFPAs



Challenges with the implementation of sectoral support

Special focus 1: objectives of the SFPAs



To contribute towards **resource conservation and environmental sustainability** through **rational and sustainable exploitation** of living marine resources of the coastal state



To contribute to continuing the **activity of the Union fleets** and the employment linked to the fleets operating within the SFPAs



To support the **development of a sustainable fisheries sector** in Partner countries

Source: *Council Conclusions regarding the External Dimension of the CFP (2012)*

Basis for the evaluation of SFPAs and their protocols.

Reflected in Article 31, 32 and 33 of the CFP

Most Long-Distance Fishing in Foreign Waters Dominated by Only a Few Governments

New atlas data shows China, European Union among the five political entities responsible for most subsidized distant-water fishing worldwide

ISSUE BRIEF | May 27, 2022 | Read time: 12 min

Projects: Reducing Harmful Fisheries Subsidies



FISH FOR CASH: How the EU robs Africa of its seafood

September 5, 2017

Investigations



Why should taxpayers pay for private fishing fleets in third countries?

0 Comments

Shareholder: Africa, Ocean Economy, Opinion

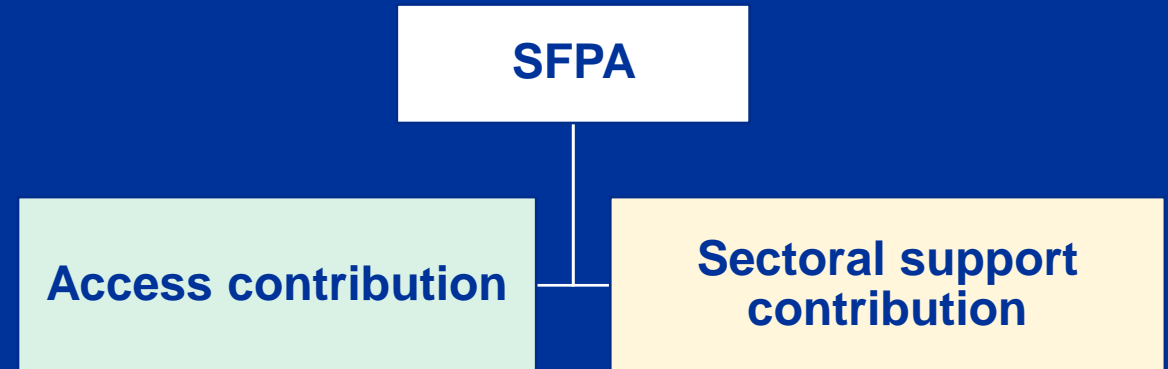
BY ISABELLA LÖVIN, STOCKHOLM, SEPTEMBER 25, 2023, 2:19:29 PM

1 co-observer

Just a few decades ago the EU was heavily criticised for its 'pay, fish and go' approach when negotiating fisheries access agreements with third countries. The fleets were accused of over-fishing and competition with local fishermen, thereby contributing to food insecurity and a strong sense of injustice and exploitation in many local communities, *not least in Africa*.

Step-by-step this approach has changed over the years, turning the fisheries agreements into so called partnership agreements with around 35 countries in the

Special focus 2: financial structure



SFPAs are criticised for access contribution, with the following arguments:

- EU should not use public funds to pay for operation of private fishing fleets
- Fishing opportunities paid in advance in SFPAs are not used at optimum level
- Access contribution should be considered a subsidy under WTO



Special focus 3: level playing field

STATE OF PLAY

Transparency clause – not enough incentive and/or capacity for partner country to implement, increased pressure from other foreign fleets, etc.

IUU fishing in EEZ of partner countries

Existence of dormant agreements create additional restraints on agility of the EU industry



RESULT

Sustainability and the impact of foreign fleets becomes more challenging to monitor

Reduced presence of EU fleet in EEZs of partner countries (both relatively to other fleets and in absolute terms)

EU is no longer the main partner for SFPA partner countries

Less agility for the EU fleet



Thank you!

