



Brussels, 5 June 2025
(OR. en)

9804/25
ADD 2

PECHE 154

COVER NOTE

From:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director
date of receipt:	4 June 2025
To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

Subject:	COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT EVALUATION on the implementing Protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles Accompanying the document Recommendation for a COUNCIL DECISION authorising the opening of negotiations on behalf of the European Union for the Conclusion of a Protocol implementing the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles
----------	--

Delegations will find attached document SWD(2025) 136 final.

Encl.: SWD(2025) 136 final



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 4.6.2025
SWD(2025) 136 final

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

EVALUATION

**on the implementing Protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the
European Union and the Republic of Seychelles**

Accompanying the document

Recommendation for a

COUNCIL DECISION

**authorising the opening of negotiations on behalf of the European Union for the
Conclusion of a Protocol implementing the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement
between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles**

{COM(2025) 269 final} - {SWD(2025) 137 final}

Table of contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1.	Purpose of the evaluation.....	1
1.2.	Scope of the evaluation	1
1.3.	Methodology of the evaluation	2
2.	WHAT WAS THE EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE INTERVENTION?	3
2.1	Description of the intervention and its objectives	3
2.1.1	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs)	3
2.1.2	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Seychelles	5
3.	HOW HAS THE SITUATION EVOLVED OVER THE EVALUATION PERIOD?	9
3.1.	Current state of play	9
3.2.	Utilisation of fishing opportunities	9
3.3.	Catches.....	10
3.4.	Scientific Cooperation	10
3.5.	Technical measures.....	11
3.6.	Sectoral support component	13
3.7.	Financial aspects:	15
3.8.	Reporting Obligations	16
4.	EVALUATION FINDINGS (ANALYTICAL PART).....	17
4.1.	Effectiveness: To what extent was the intervention successful and why?	17
4.2.	Efficiency: the desired effects are achieved at reasonable costs	24
4.3.	Coherence: the alignment of the Protocol intervention logic with EU other interventions with similar objectives	27
4.5.	Acceptability	30
4.6.	Relevance: Is the intervention still relevant?	31
5.	WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED?	33
5.1.	Main conclusions	33
6.	EX-ANTE EVALUATION.....	34
6.1.	Problem analysis and needs assessment.....	34
6.2.	Current and future needs of Seychelles	34
6.3.	Current and future need for the European Union	35

6.4.	Current and future needs for Seychelles and the European Union.....	36
6.5.	The EU added-value	36
6.6.	Policy and Management objectives	37
6.7.	Policy options, including associated risks	38
6.8.	Results and impacts	41
6.8.1.	Environmental-Economic-Social impacts	41
7.	COMPARISON ACCORDING TO STANDARD EVALUATION CRITERIA (RELEVANCE, EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY AND COHERENCE)	45
7.5.	Preferred option	45
7.6.	Monitoring of a future implementing Protocol	46
ANNEX I: PROCEDURAL INFORMATION.....		48
ANNEX II. METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL MODELS USED		50
ANNEX III. EVALUATION MATRIX AND, WHERE RELEVANT, DETAILS ON ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS (BY CRITERION)		52
ANNEX IV. OVERVIEW OF BENEFITS AND COSTS		64
ANNEX V. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATION - SYNOPSIS REPORT		67

Glossary

<i>Term or acronym</i>	<i>Definition</i>
SFPAs	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements
EU	European Union
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
IUU fishing	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing.
JSC	Joint Scientific Committees
JSM	Joint Scientific Meetings
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
ERS	Electronic Reporting System
FMC	Fisheries Monitoring Centre
RFMOs	Regional Fisheries Management Organisations
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
ACP	Africa, Caribbean and Pacific
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
WB	World Bank
GNB	Gross National Benefit

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of the evaluation

In the framework of the external dimension of the EU's Common Fishery Policy (CFP)¹, the Commission negotiates and implements Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) with third countries. The SFPAs create a legal, environmental economic and social governance framework for fishing activities carried out by Union fishing vessels in third country waters. In exchange, the EU provides a partner country with financial compensation for access to its waters and financial assistance to implement a national strategy for sustainable fisheries and ocean governance, and the blue economy. The EU contribution is complemented by fees payable by EU vessel owners.

According to Article 3(1)(d) and (e) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the EU has exclusive powers on the conservation of marine biological resources under the CFP. The European Commission is therefore responsible for the negotiation and implementation of the SFPAs.

According to Article 31(10) of the CFP Basic Regulation¹, the European Commission shall also arrange for ex-post and ex-ante evaluations of each implementing protocol to a SFPA, before it submits to the Council of the EU a recommendation to authorise the opening of negotiations for a successor protocol. These evaluations aim to inform decision makers before adopting a Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations on behalf of the EU.

This obligation is complemented by Article 34 of the Financial Regulation², according to which evaluations for all programmes and activities which entail significant spending shall be subject to ex-ante and retrospective evaluations. .

Importantly, under Article 31(5) of the CFP Basic Regulation¹, Union vessels cannot fish where there is no protocol implementing an SFPA between the EU and a third country. In order for Union vessels to continue fishing under an SFPA after an implementing protocol expires, a successor protocol must be negotiated.

1.2. Scope of the evaluation

This Staff Working Document (SWD) makes an ex-post and an ex-ante evaluation covering the application of the current implementing Protocol (the implementing Protocol)

¹ Regulation (EU) 1380/2013 of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy ([OJ L354, 28.12.2013, p. 22](#))

² Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 ([OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1](#)).

of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership concluded between the EU and the Republic of Seychelles Agreement (the Agreement). These evaluations are primarily informed by an evaluation study ³conducted by an independent consultant.

The ex-post evaluation covers most of the period of application of the current implementing Protocol of the Agreement, starting from the February 2020 to November 2024. It provides an overall assessment of the implementing Protocol, drawing conclusions in terms of its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, acceptance, EU added value of the intervention. The detailed evaluation questions corresponding to these evaluation criteria can be found in Annex III and further addressed in section 4.

The ex-ante evaluation analyses the relevant objectives for the Agreement and its implementing protocol, considering the current and future needs for this intervention. It considers the lessons learned from previous implementing protocols and the results of the ex-post evaluation of the current implementing Protocol.

Finally, the ex-ante evaluation considers and draws conclusions on the possible impacts of the following two policy scenarios:

- A negotiation of an improved implementing protocol for the Agreement;
- No negotiation of a successor implementing protocol for the Agreement.

1.3. Methodology of the evaluation

The results of this SWD are mainly informed by an evaluation conducted by an independent consultant. This evaluation study took place from October 2024 to January 2025 under the guidance of an interservice group established by different services of the European Commission and within the framework of the terms of reference of specific contract number 12 under the framework contract MARE/2021/OP/0001. The methodology of this evaluation study consisted of three main components: analysis of available information, consultations, and preparation of an evaluation report.

On the analysis of available information, DG MARE provided all relevant internal documents and databases to the independent consultant. Other external documentation was also used, such as regulatory texts and reports from relevant scientific working groups.

On the consultation, the independent consultant consulted stakeholders in the EU and Seychelles. EU stakeholders were consulted between November and December 2024. Seychelles stakeholders were consulted during the consultant's field mission to Seychelles in November 2024. Moreover, a 'call for evidence' document was also published in the Commission's Have Your Say Portal for feedback for the period November-December

³ [Link to the website](#)

2024⁴. See more detailed information about the stakeholder consultations in Annex V ‘Synopsis Report’.

The evaluation was submitted by the independent consultant to the European Commission in January 2025 and the overall level and quality of findings gathered is robust. Nevertheless, this SWD, and the evaluation on which it is based, considers all information available as of November 2024. It does not consider information beyond this date because the evaluation must be finalised at least a year before the expiry date of the implementing Protocol to obtain a mandate for negotiation and subsequently negotiate a successor protocol.

Detailed information on the methodology, including how the supporting evaluation study was conducted can be found in Annex II.

2. WHAT WAS THE EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE INTERVENTION?

2.1 Description of the intervention and its objectives

2.1.1 Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs)

The CFP Basic Regulation covers the conservation of marine biological resources and the management of fisheries and fleets exploiting such resources within Union waters and by Union fishing vessels outside Union waters. The first fisheries agreements between the EU and third countries date back to the late 1980s and are enshrined in the CFP. In accordance with UN Sustainable Development Goal 14 (*life below water*), the SFPAs should contribute towards resource conservation and environmental sustainability of the exploitation of living marine resources of a coastal partner State. The SFPAs should also contribute to efficient data collection; monitoring, control and surveillance measures; and the respect for democratic principles and human rights.

The SFPAs establish a legal, environmental economic and social governance framework for fishing activities carried out by Union fishing vessels in third country waters. Under the framework of the SFPAs, Union vessels shall only catch surplus of the allowable catch, as referred to in Article 62(2) and (3) of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)⁵. This surplus must be identified, in a clear and transparent manner, on the basis of the best available scientific advice. In addition, to ensure the sustainable exploitation of surpluses of marine biological resources, the EU must endeavour to ensure that the SFPAs are mutually beneficial to the Union and to the third country concerned, including its local population and fishing industry.

In terms of financial compensation, the EU provides a partner country with financial compensation for access to its waters and financial assistance to implement a national

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13735-EU-Guinea-Bissau-fisheries-agreement-negotiation-mandate-for-a-new-protocol_en

⁵ https://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_overview_convention.htm

strategy for fisheries and the blue economy. The EU contribution is complemented by fees payable by EU vessel owners.

Importantly, SFPAs are exclusive and rendered operational only through their implementing Protocols. In order for Union vessels to continue fishing under an SFPA after an implementing protocol expires, a successor protocol must be negotiated.

The implementation of an SFPA and its implementing protocol is monitored by a Joint Committee composed of representatives from both parties.

In July 2011, the Commission adopted a Communication on the external dimension of the CFP⁶ and proposed several actions to reform SFPAs. The Council adopted Conclusions regarding the External Dimension of the CFP on 19 March 2012⁷ and the European Parliament expressed its views in a report adopted in November 2012⁸.

General and specific objectives of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements

The overarching objective of the external dimension of the CFP is to promote high standards in terms of fisheries management at the international and regional levels as well as under bilateral agreements, with the aim to ensure a level playing field. General and specific objectives of SFPAs are the following⁵:

- 1) To contribute towards resource conservation and environmental sustainability through rational and sustainable exploitation of living marine resources of the coastal state, in particular by:**
 - a. directing fisheries exclusively at surplus resources and preventing the overfishing of stocks, on the basis of the best scientific advice and reinforced transparency on the global fishing efforts in third countries' waters;
 - b. following the same principle and promoting the same standards for fisheries management as applied in EU waters;
 - c. improving the scientific and technical evaluation of the fisheries concerned (notably by improving data collection and transparency on fishing efforts); and
 - d. ensuring compliance and combating IUU fishing.
- 2) To contribute to continuing the activity of the Union fleets and the employment linked to the fleets operating within SFPAs by:**
 - a. seeking appropriate share of the surplus resources, fully commensurate with the EU fleets interests;
 - b. ensuring that the level of fees payable by Union ship-owners for their fishing activities is fair, non-discriminatory and commensurate to the benefits provided through the access conditions while avoiding any discriminatory treatment towards EU vessels and promoting a level playing field among the different fleets;
 - c. ensuring supply for the EU and for the markets of certain developing countries;
 - d. encouraging the creation of a secure environment that is favourable to private investment and economic activities; and

⁶ Communication from the Commission to the European parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the regions on the External Dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy, COM(2011)424 final, of 13.7.2011.

⁷ Council conclusions on the external dimension of the CFP, 19.03.2012, 7086/12 (http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/agricult/129052.pdf)

⁸ European Parliament's report on the External Dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy, of 22.11.2012.

- e. taking into account the specific interests of the Union's outermost regions located in the vicinity.
- 3) To support the development of a sustainable fisheries sector in partner countries by:**
 - a. contributing to the capacity building in the third countries (notably by improving fisheries legal framework, control and surveillance and science);
 - b. defining annual and multiannual objectives to be achieved with the aim of developing sustainable fishing activities;
 - c. assessment of the results obtained in terms of impacts, and also on budgetary and financial requirements; and
 - d. promoting the employment of local seamen, improving infrastructures and encouraging landings, supporting the third country in developing local fisheries and processing industry.

2.1.2 Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Seychelles

The SFPA between the EU and the Republic of Seychelles, and its current implementing Protocol, provide fishing opportunities to fish for Union fishing vessels in Seychelles' waters and provides significant sectoral support for the sustainable development of the national fisheries and blue economy sectors.

It establishes the principles on the economic, financial, technical and scientific cooperation in the fisheries sector with a view to promoting responsible fishing in Seychelles' waters to ensure the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources and develop the Seychelles fisheries sector.

The Union and the Seychelles concluded a SFPA in 24 February 2020 to replace the Fisheries Partnership Agreement signed in 2006. The Agreement concluded in 2020 was accompanied by an implementing protocol covering the period from 24 February 2020 to 23 February 2026.

The agreement with Seychelles is a bilateral agreement for highly migratory species. Species covered under the current Protocol are highly migratory species listed in Annex 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS). The current Protocol provides fishing opportunities for a maximum of 40 EU tuna purse seiners and 8 EU surface longliners. The Protocol allows EU vessels from France, Italy, Portugal and Spain to fish in Seychelles' exclusive economic zone.

The current Protocol includes an annual EU financial contribution for access – EUR 2 500 000 - and for sectoral support – EUR 2 800 000. The EU contribution is complemented by fees payable by EU vessel owners on licences and catches.

The following table sets out the main features of the Protocol implementing the EU-Seychelles SFPA for the period 2020-2026.

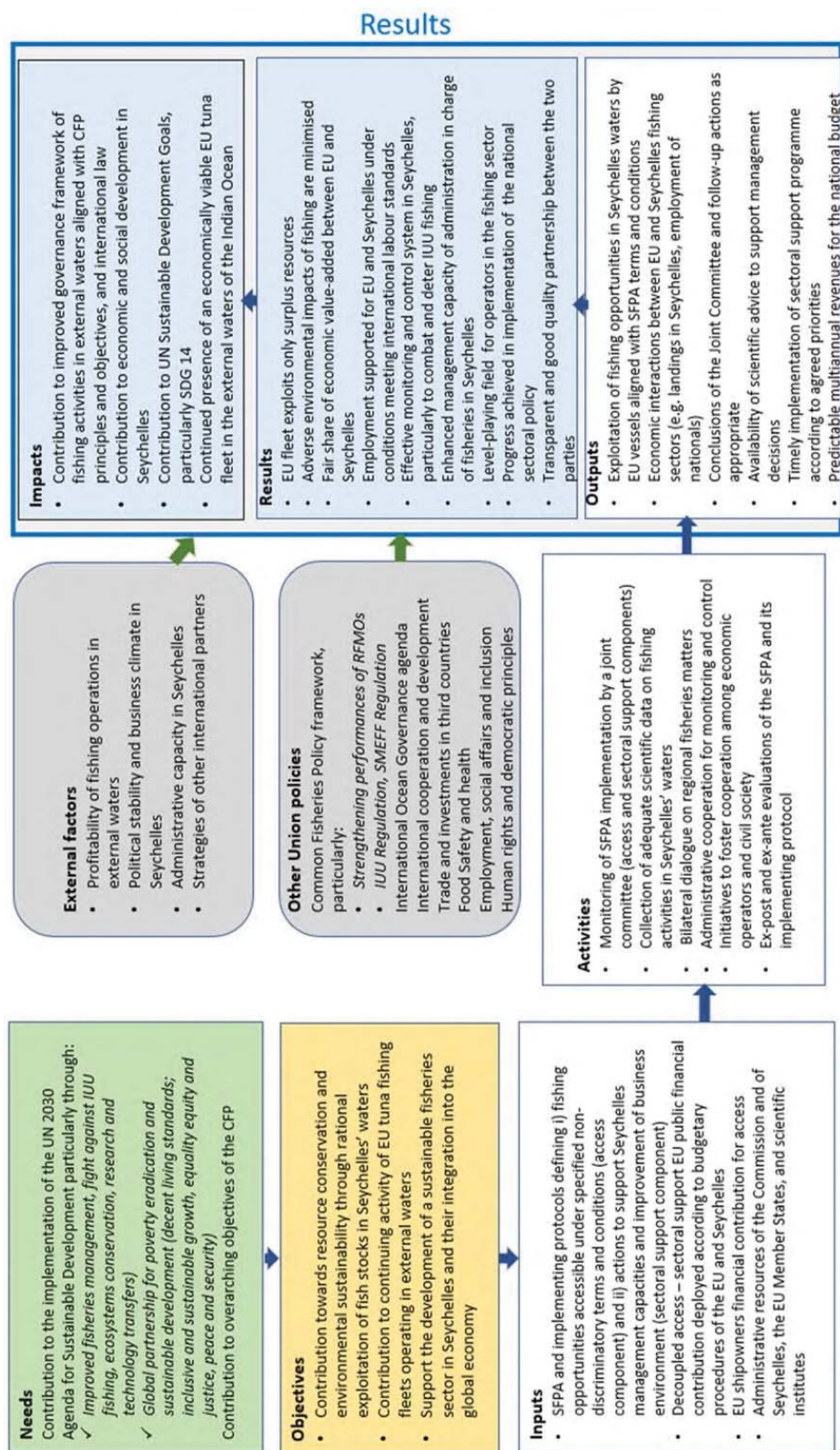
Main elements of the current implementing Protocol of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and Seychelles

Duration of the SFPA	Six years renewable.
Date of entry into force of SFPA	24 February 2020*
Date of entry/ into force of Protocol	24 February 2020*
Duration of the Protocol	Six years: 24 February 2020 to 23 February 2026*
Maximum number of EU vessels authorised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 tuna purse seiners. • 8 surface longliners. • Support vessels with number in accordance with IOTC rules.
Species authorised	Highly migratory species listed in Annex 1 to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), with the exception of some shark species and other species which are protected or prohibited under the laws of Seychelles, the framework of the IOTC and other international agreements.
Annual counterpart finance by the EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUR 2 500 000 per year for access to the Seychelles fishing zone <p>Financial compensation for access corresponds to a reference tonnage of 50 000 tonnes. Catch exceeding the reference tonnage is subject to a payment of EUR 50 for each additional tonne.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUR 2 800 000 per year for the support and implementation of the Seychelles' national fisheries policy and related policies.
Vessel operator contributions	<p>For each tuna purse seiner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual non-recoverable advance payment of EUR 56 000 the first and second year, EUR 59 500 the following years representing 700 tonnes catch at EUR 80 per tonne the first two years and EUR 85 per tonne the following years. • Contribution to environmental fund of EUR 2.25 per GT. <p>For each surface longliner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual non-recoverable advance payment of EUR 7 200 in the first and second year, and EUR 7 650 in the following years representing 90 tonnes of catch at EUR 80 per tonne the first two years and EUR 85 per tonne in the following years. <p>For each support vessel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual authorisation fee of EUR 5 000.

The sectoral support component is used for programmed activities in the following areas: (1) Development and implementation of fisheries and aquaculture management plans; (2) Fisheries infrastructure development for artisanal, industrial and aquaculture sectors; (3) capacity building.

The figure below provides a visual description of the intervention logic. It seeks to connect the needs, objectives, actions and expected achievements. The latter is discussed in terms of the outputs, results and impacts of the implementing Protocol.

Intervention logic of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Seychelles, and its current implementing Protocol



2.2. Point(s) of comparison

The EU and Seychelles have a long history in the area of fisheries. The first fisheries agreement concluded between the EU and Seychelles dates back from 1987. On 24 February 2020, the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles signed a new 6-year SFPA tacitly renewable.

The most relevant and accessible point of comparison is the previous implementing Protocol under the Fishery Partnership Agreement.

Under the Protocol 2014-2020 (for which the evaluation covered the period 2014-18)⁹:

- EU fleet access to the waters of Seychelles was granted to up to 40 purse seiners and up to 6 surface longliners.
- The annual mean of tropical tuna catches was 48 000t (96% of reference tonnage), and the generated income for Seychelles:
 - o EUR 70 million per year (mean of catches value per year, p. 86).
 - o EUR 6 million per year of implementation (total of contributions EU and shipowners p. 61)

The fishery resource targeted by the Union fleet is scientifically assessed by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), the relevant RFMO.

- The status of the three main targeted stocks is (indicators relate to biomass for overfished status and to fishing mortality for overfishing status, for a concerned specie cf table 4 p. 18):
 - o Yellow fin tuna: not overfished, no overfishing occurring
 - o Big eye tuna: overfished, overfishing occurring
 - o Skipjack : not overfished, no overfishing occurring
- Calculation turnover for the EU fleet is EUR 70 million (table 33 p.86) for 2014-2018 period, added value (direct and indirect) has a mean of EUR 55 115. On average, 43% of the total value-added was estimated to have accrued to EU, 24% to Seychelles and 32% to other entities which include mostly coastal States of the Western Indian Ocean.
- Level and repartition of the generated added value: It is estimated that every EUR 1 invested by the EU in the compensation payment for access supports the creation of EUR 18.9 value added (p91).
- The Protocol is estimated having support a total of 1 560 FTEs (direct and indirect employment). In total, Seychelles employment supported is equivalent to 22% total (350 FTEs) with most jobs supported in the upstream and downstream ancillary activities of non-EU and non-Seychelles parties (Figure 9 p93).

⁹ Reference pages in this section are to the evaluation final report of September 2017 of SC n° 3 under MARE 2015/23 framework contract <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b2a08ce7-bac1-11e7-a7f8-01aa75ed71a1>

- Situation of the control and surveillance system in Seychelles: The Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA) coordinates fisheries Monitoring Control and surveillance (MCS) through a specific section comprising the Monitoring and Control Unit and the Enforcement Unit. The MCU hosts the Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC) which issues fishing authorisations and monitors compliance of all fishing vessel's with lawful conditions applied. This includes the operations of satellite Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), the validation of statistical documents for ICCAT, IOTC, EU and Non-EU, including for the catch certificates. Staffing comprises 9 inspectors, 3 licence officers 5 fisheries monitors (in the FMC) and one head of Division. The MCS unit has a small inshore patrol vessel (range within 20nm of shore) and several vehicles. For other MCS means (patrol vessels and aircraft) the MCS unit collaborates with the Coastguard and the Police. There is no MoU in place with these agencies and collaboration is on an ad hoc basis, which is reported by SFA to functions well (p. 45).
- The Sectoral Support contribution transferred to Seychelles was EUR 3 976 607 in 2017 out of the EUR 7 503 033 (p. 78) taking into account the outstanding balance from the previous Protocol of EUR2.4 million

3. HOW HAS THE SITUATION EVOLVED OVER THE EVALUATION PERIOD?

3.1. Current state of play

With regard to the implementation of the Protocol, the current state of play is the following:

3.2. Utilisation of fishing opportunities

On an annual average, almost 65% of the maximum number of 40 fishing licenses for all EU tuna purse seiners were granted in the period 2020-2024; and 23% of the maximum number of 8 fishing licences for all EU surface longliners over the same period, and an annual average of 58% when considering both fishing categories combined.)¹⁰.

Average annual fishing authorisations granted to EU vessels (per vessel category) in the SFPA fishing zone (as of October 2024)

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Average
Tuna purse seiners (Maximum 40)	65%	70%	65%	65%	60%	65%
Surface longliners (Maximum 8)	63%	38%	13%	0%	0%	23%
Both categories (Maximum 48)	65%	65%	56%	54%	50%	58%

¹⁰ See report, page 11

3.3. Catches

Total catches of all species obtained by EU tuna vessels in the Seychelles fishing zone amounted to an annual average of 49 340 tonnes between 2020 and 2023.

On average, EU tuna vessels caught 98.7% of the reference tonnage of 50 000 tons agreed under the Protocol. EU catches varied between 140% of the reference tonnage caught in 2022 and 54% in 2021, with, hence, one year during which total catches were higher than the reference tonnage, confirming the highly migratory nature of the tuna species. Close to 100% of EU catches in the Seychelles fishing zone were obtained by EU tuna purse seiners, with comparatively minor contributions by the EU surface longline fleet.

Annual catch of EU tuna vessels in the Seychelles fishing zone by fishing category and flag Member State (2020 – 2023, tonnes)

	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average
Tuna purse seiners, of which:	54 757	26 812	69 860	45 516	49 236
<i>ES</i>	28 684	10 619	41 376	23 684	26 091
<i>FR</i>	23 934	14 532	26 380	18 689	20 884
<i>IT</i>	2 140	1 661	2 104	3 143	2 262
Surface longliners, of which:	252	152	11	0	104
<i>ES</i>	187	98	11	0	74
<i>FR</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>PT</i>	65	54	0	0	30
TOTAL	55 009	26 964	69 871	45 516	49 340

3.4. Scientific Cooperation

The stocks targeted by the EU fleet are scientifically evaluated by the IOTC, the relevant RFMO, to which both the EU and Seychelles are active Members, and which has provided the best available scientific advice for the management decisions taken by Joint Committee.

Scientific cooperation between the EU and Seychelles takes place within the multilateral framework of the IOTC, whereas sectoral support is also granted for having contributed to the improving of the statistical coverage of Seychelles fisheries and the participation of Seychelles delegates in the IOTC meetings.

Tuna and tuna-like species are under the management of the IOTC. The status of the three main targeted stock (yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna, Skipjack tuna) was assessed as follows¹¹ (p. 36 table 4):

- Yellowfin tuna: not overfished, no overfishing occurring. The yellowfin tuna stock was assessed as both overfished and subject to overfishing until 2023. In 2024, a

¹¹ Indicators relate to biomass for overfished status and to fishing mortality for overfishing status, for a concerned species.

new stock assessment concluded on a level of exploitation within sustainable limits, with an 89% probability. EU purse seiners represented about 16% of total yellowfin tuna catch in the Indian Ocean.

- Big eye tuna: overfished, overfishing occurring. The situation of the bigeye tuna deteriorated, moving from a situation of the stock being subject to overfishing but not overfished between 2019 and 2021, to one from 2022 where the stock has been both overfished and subject to overfishing. EU purse seiners represented about 9% of total bigeye tuna catch in the Indian Ocean.
- Skipjack: not overfished, no overfishing occurring. The skipjack stock remained within sustainability limits over the period covered by the current Protocol. EU purse seiners represented about 20% of total skipjack catch in the Indian Ocean.

Both species targeted by EU surface longliners (swordfish and blue shark) are within sustainability limits. The situation of the swordfish stock was assessed in 2022. EU surface longline catches represented about 10% of total catch of both species.

The stocks listed above are exploited by the fishing fleets of the 29 contracting parties of the IOTC in all areas of the Indian Ocean, including the high sea and in areas under national jurisdictions (including Seychelles), with the EU representing between 10% and 20% of total catches depending on the species. Conservation and management measures (CMMs) are adopted within the multilateral framework of the IOTC. They include *inter alia* technical measures such as capacity limits, catch limits, time closure, landing obligation and limits on the number of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), and monitoring measures such as vessel monitoring systems (VMS), catch declarations, observer coverage and port inspections. IOTC CMMs apply to all tuna fishing activities, including those taking place in the Seychelles fishing zone.

3.5. Technical measures

3.5.1. Monitoring, control and surveillance

The Protocol lays down the monitoring, control and surveillance regime (Chapter III of the Annex to the Protocol) applying to all EU tuna vessels operating in Seychelles' fishing zone.

Catch declarations

During the first years of the application of the protocol, some of the reporting of bycatches of the EU tuna purse seiners were missing declarations or not using the IOTC templates. The two parties therefore decided to apply a 1% mark-up on catch of major tuna species (skipjack, yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna) to estimate the amount of bycatches to be factored into the calculation of EU total catches for 2022. As from 2023, the quality of bycatch declarations by EU tuna purse seine fleet was compliant with IOTC standards. As

from the 2023, these improvements were confirmed by the two Parties and did not trigger a need for further corrective adjustments.

Electronic Reporting System (ERS)

Although envisaged for implementation under the previous Protocol and under the current Protocol, the ERS was still not effective in November 2024. The matter has been discussed during all meetings of the Joint Committee and the problems encountered appear to be the result of difficulties to transition to the Fisheries Language for Universal Exchanges (FLUX) to exchange fisheries-related data between the EU and Seychelles which, in the absence of functional ERS, are still submitted in paper format (logbooks) or by email (e.g. entry/exit notifications).

EU tuna vessels authorised to access the Seychelles fishing zone report to their flag Member State have been using ERS in line with the EU Control Regulation¹² since 2010. For Seychelles' tuna vessels, implementation of the ERS has been successfully trialled on the national purse seine fleet (13 vessels) with financial support from the sectoral support programme.

Both EU shipowners and the Seychelles authorities emphasised the need to have a functional ERS to decrease administrative costs stemming from submission and treatment of paper logbooks. In addition, the Seychelles authorities raised the need to have rapid provision of EU catch and landing declarations through the ERS in view of their importance for the validation of catch certificates required by the EU IUU Regulation¹³ and their possible involvement in the implementation of the derogation to EU tolerance margins foreseen by Article 14.4 of the EU Control Regulation in the case of tropical tuna species which are landed unsorted.

Surveillance and Control

Sectoral support also includes reinforcement of monitoring, control and surveillance. 28-day seaborne control patrols (coastal and high sea areas) and 100-hour airborne patrols. Development of the patrols relied on utilisation of surveillance platforms owned by other entities due to lack of adequate Seychelles Fisheries Authorities (SFA) resources (Seychelles coastguard for the seaborne patrols, airplane owned by Seychelles Defense for the airborne patrols). The results for fisheries control patrols have been below expectations,

¹² Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy, amending Regulations (EC) No 847/96, (EC) No 2371/2002, (EC) No 811/2004, (EC) No 768/2005, (EC) No 2115/2005, (EC) No 2166/2005, (EC) No 388/2006, (EC) No 509/2007, (EC) No 676/2007, (EC) No 1098/2007, (EC) No 1300/2008, (EC) No 1342/2008 and repealing Regulations (EEC) No 2847/93, (EC) No 1627/94 and (EC) No 1966/2006. OJ L 343, 22.12.2009, p. 1–50

¹³ Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, amending Regulations (EEC) No 2847/93, (EC) No 1936/2001 and (EC) No 601/2004 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 1093/94 and (EC) No 1447/1999. OJ L 286, 29.10.2008, p. 1–32

due mainly to the difficulty encountered by SFA to mobilize the assets of other national entities.

Finally, the review of the minutes of the Joint Committee reports confirms that the EU tuna fleet has been broadly compliant with the different monitoring and surveillance measures enacted by the Protocol.

3.5.2. Employment of national seamen on board of EU vessels

The EU purse seine fleet did not meet the employment target foreseen by the Protocol (of at least two qualified national fishers on each EU purse seiners when operating in the Seychelles fishing zone). Minutes of the Joint Committee report five Seychellois employed in 2021, six in 2022 and eight in 2023, suggesting an improvement in the number of Seychellois employed over time.

While the lists of candidates have been submitted as expected by the Seychelles authorities, a majority of proposed candidates do not have previous working experience onboard tuna fishing vessels. The Seychelles authorities acknowledged the lack of practical experience of their proposed candidates. The Seychelles authorities also confirmed difficulties in promoting employment of national fishers on national industrial and semi-industrial fishing fleets resulting in high percentages of foreign crew working on the industrial purse seine and longline industrial fleet segments.

As a result of insufficient employment of Seychellois fishers, the EU shipowners paid the penalty foreseen by the Protocol (EUR35 for each non-embarked fisher per day of fishing activities in the Seychelles fishing zone). The total annual compensation paid amounted to EUR105 000 on average between 2020 and 2023, representing non-embarkation of national fishers for the equivalent of about 3 000 person days.

3.5.3. Observers

The Protocol's clauses regarding embarkation of observers designated by Seychelles on EU vessels were fully implemented. The voluntary 100% observer coverage implemented by EU operators to ensure full transparency of their operations was successful.

In addition, the sectoral support programme committed on activities supporting improved monitoring of fishing fleets and control and surveillance activities. Results obtained included *inter alia* training and deployment of observers.

3.6. Sectoral support component

The current implementing Protocol has earmarked a budget of EUR2 800 000 over a period of six years to contribute to the implementation of the national strategy for fisheries and aquaculture and support the sustainable management of fishery resources and the development of the fisheries sector in Seychelles.

3.6.1. Monitoring of sectoral support

The Joint Committee is responsible for adopting annual and multi-annual programming and monitoring sectoral support. Any changes to programming must be approved by the Joint Committee.

Article 4 of the Protocol to the SFPA requires the Joint Committee to agree during its first meeting on guidelines on the implementation of sectoral support to cover a range of issues not specified in the Protocol such as the monitoring and evaluation framework for evaluating the results obtained each year and terms of payment of the EU financial contribution. Other requirements include the need for Seychelles authorities to report annually to the Joint Committee on progress made in the implementation of sectoral support (Article 4, point 6 of the Protocol), and for the two parties to ensure the visibility of actions implemented through the sectoral support.

So far, Joint Committee meetings were held as follows:

1. March 2021 by videoconference (Joint Committee 1) – delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic
2. November 2021, in Seychelles (Joint Committee 2)
3. October 2022, in Brussels (Joint Committee 3)
4. September 2023, in Seychelles (Joint Committee 4)
5. September 2024, in Brussels (Joint Committee 5)

Implementation of the sectoral support is monitored by the EU on the basis of supporting documents supplied by the Ministry of Fisheries, and through technical missions.

However, the timeliness of submission of annual implementation reports has not been up to expectations. The voluntary guidelines approved by the two parties established that the deadline for submission of the annual implementation reports was 15 days before the meeting of the JC meetings. Nonetheless, the JC could base its assessment of the progress in the implementation of the sectoral support based on detailed excel tables of the budget executed and the main outcomes of each activity.

3.6.2. Payment of sectoral support

The current implementing Protocol has earmarked an EU financial contribution of EUR 2 800 000 per year, hence EUR 16.8 million for the total duration of the protocol (2020-2026) towards sectoral support. The current implementing Protocol provides for the EU to suspend payments in whole or in part if the Joint Committee considers that results are not in line with programming.

EU sectoral support payments have been made on time in accordance with the rules foreseen by the Protocol and by the sectoral support implementing guidelines approved by the Joint Committee.

History of payments of the annual tranches of the sectoral support under the current Protocol

Annual tranches	Date paid by the EU	Decision basis
Tranche 1/6	11/11/2020	Approval of the multiannual programme and of the first annual work programme by exchanges of letters (JC could not meet as yet)
Tranche 2/6	08/12/2021	Validation by JC2 of 75% financial execution rate of the budget for the first annual programme (nominal amount* + carry-over from the previous Protocol)
Tranche 3/6	14/11/2022	Validation by JC3 of 79% financial execution rate of the budget for the second annual programme (nominal amount + carry-over from the previous instalment)
Tranche 4/6	21/09/2023	Validation by JC4 of 95% financial execution rate of the budget for the third annual programme (nominal amount only)
Tranche 5/6	13/11/ 2024	Post JC5 validation by exchanges of letters of 75% financial execution rate of the budget for the fourth annual programme (nominal amount only)
Tranche 6/6 (expected end of 2025)		Depends on the developments during 2025

As of November 2024, Seychelles had been paid by five annual tranches out of six, representing a total payment of EUR 14 million (83% of the maximum EU contribution for the sectoral support foreseen).

3.7. Financial aspects:

- Generated income for access on average for Seychelles of EUR 10 million (EU yearly public contribution plus shipowners' contributions average).
- Level and repartition of the generated added value: It is estimated that for each euro of public investment, EUR 20.07 are generated in added value, split in EUR 7.67 for the EU, EUR 5.18 for Seychelles and EUR 7.22 to other entities.
- Direct and indirect employment: the number of full time equivalent (FTE) jobs directly linked to the protocol is close to 190, including an estimated 6 FTEs for Seychellois national employee as crew. Estimate indicates almost 1 100 FTEs supported by the protocol in upstream and downstream ancillary industries.
- Sectoral support contribution transferred to Seychelles EUR 14 million up to November 2024.

3.8. Reporting Obligations

Reporting obligations are a requirement stemming from EU legislation that obliges Member States authorities, private organisations and/or public organisations to provide (in principle periodically) structured or unstructured data (qualitative or quantitative) to competent authorities at EU or national level¹⁴.

Apart from one exception, the current SFPA/Protocol does not entail any reporting obligations over and above those which would otherwise be required, or which were required under the previous Protocol. The only exception is the Protocol requirement for Seychelles to submit an annual report on the implementation of the sectoral support and a final report before the expiry of the Protocol (Article 4.6). However, this reporting requirement was in the voluntary implementing guidelines agreed by the two parties for implementation of the previous 2014-2020 sectoral support programme.

Reporting obligation	Additional to other EU, Seychelles, or IOTC legislation and requirements?
EU shipowners Submission of an application for fishing authorisation (Annex, Chapter I, section 2)	No (requirements included in the previous Protocol, and required by the Seychelles Fisheries Act, 2014)
EU shipowners Reporting of catches including through the electronic reporting system when established (Annex, Chapter III, section 1 and 2)	No (requirements included in the previous Protocol, and required by Control Regulation (EU) 1224/2009, IOTC CMM and the Seychelles Fisheries Act, 2014)
EU shipowners Notification of entry or exit the Seychelles fishing zone, including through the ERS when established (Annex, Chapter III, section 3)	No (requirement included in the previous Protocol and required by the Seychelles Fisheries Act, 2014)
EU shipowners Notification of landings in the Seychelles designated port (Annex, Chapter III, section 4)	No (requirements included in the previous Protocol, and required by Control Regulation (EU) 1224/2009 and the Seychelles Fisheries Act, 2014)
EU shipowners Notification of transshipment in the Seychelles designated port (Annex, Chapter III, section 5)	No (requirements included in the previous Protocol, and required by Control Regulation (EU) 1224/2009 and IOTC)
EU shipowners and EU MS authorities	No

¹⁴ [Administrative burden – rationalisation of reporting requirements \(europa.eu\)](#). The notion of reporting requirements includes the provision of information from businesses to other businesses or from businesses to consumers, while certification, labelling, permitting, and similar processes are not included.

Reporting obligation	Additional to other EU, Seychelles, or IOTC legislation and requirements?
Reporting of vessel positions through satellite-based vessel tracking device or VMS (Annex, Chapter III, section 7)	(requirement applicable as a result of Control Regulation (EU) 1224/2009, IOTC CMM and the Seychelles Fisheries Act, 2014)
Seychelles authorities Drawing up an annual statement of fees (Annex, Chapter I, section 4)	No (requirements included in the previous Protocol)
Seychelles authorities Annual reporting on the implementation of the sectoral support, and preparation of a final report before the end of the Protocol (Article 4.6 of the Protocol)	Yes (requirement not included in the previous Protocol, but included in the voluntary guidelines for implementation of the sectoral support programme agreed by the two parties)

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS (ANALYTICAL PART)

4.1. Effectiveness: To what extent was the intervention successful and why?

For each component (access and sectoral support) success criteria have been proposed and evaluated, by objective, for effectiveness.

Objective: contribute to the conservation of resources and environmental sustainability through rational and sustainable exploitation of Seychelles' fisheries resources

Fisheries activities are addressed exclusively at surplus resources and prevent the overfishing of stocks, based on the best scientific advice and improved transparency on the global fishing efforts in the waters included in the current Protocol.

The Protocol relates to the resource for highly migratory species distributed throughout the Indian Ocean, the surplus is therefore calculated through the management measures for highly migratory species, subject to the management of IOTC.

The most recent scientific review of the stocks targeted by the EU tuna fleet in the Seychelles fishing zone shows that all species are exploited within sustainability limits, except bigeye tuna which is overfished and subject to overfishing and for which the EU represents about 9% of total catch in the Indian Ocean.

The management of stocks targeted by the EU tuna fleet in the Seychelles' fishing zone is under the mandate of the IOTC to which both the EU and Seychelles are contracting parties. Specific conservation and management measures adopted by IOTC apply to all RFMO contracting parties fishing entities, including the EU and Seychelles, wherever they operate. The Protocol does not derogate from or conflict with any of these rules, and EU tuna fleet fishing capacity and their supply vessels operating under the Agreement have not exceeded the limits established by the IOTC and by the Protocol. Other IOTC conservation and management measures such as catch limits and limits on the number of

Fish Aggregating Devices apply at the level of the Indian Ocean, with no specific measures applying solely in the Seychelles fishing zone.

Seychelles takes part in the works of the IOTC. According to the reviews of the IOTC compliance committee, Seychelles reached a relatively high compliance rate, above the average performance of other IOTC contracting Parties and cooperating non-contracting Parties (CPCs), despite the challenges posed by the relative important position of the country as flag State, coastal State and port State. Seychelles publishes detailed information on the activities of its national tuna fleet and on the foreign tuna fleets authorised in the fishing zone through annual reports published on the SFA website and through the annual reports submitted to the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI).

Implementation of principles and standards for fisheries management as those applied in EU waters

Ecosystem protection measures implemented by EU tuna vessel operators in the Seychelles fishing zone and in the broader Indian Ocean follow IOTC conservation and management measures.

The Protocol includes payment by shipowners of EU purse seiners of a specific contribution to a national fund dedicated to environmental management and observation of marine ecosystems in Seychelles' waters. This resulted in an average annual EU contribution of EUR 165 531 to the environmental fund between 2020 and 2023,

Furthermore, EU purse seine operators utilising fishing opportunities available under the Protocol implemented unilateral measures to minimise ecosystem impacts of their activities through Fisheries Improvement Plans (FIP). FIP measures apply to all activities of purse seiners, including those in the Seychelles fishing zone, with FIP implementation status publicly available on the internet¹⁵. The commitment of EU operators materialised further by the donation to Seychelles of a former support vessel, now used by Seychelles for the organisation of FAD recovery cruises funded through the environmental fund (to which EU purse seiners also contribute).

Improvement of technical and scientific assessment of the fisheries

EU fishing activities in the Seychelles fishing zone are subject to reporting obligations mandated by IOTC and the EU CFP for any vessels authorised to target tuna in the Indian Ocean. Moreover, EU tuna fisheries are included within the scope of the EU Data Collection Programme¹⁶ aimed at collecting specific biological and economic information on EU fishing activities. The Protocol does not impose additional reporting or data collection obligations.

While the EU reporting of catches of non-target species (bycatches) was not up to expectations during the first years of the Protocol, with missing declarations or not

¹⁵ <https://fisheryprogress.org/fip-profile/indian-ocean-tuna-purse-seine-sioti>

¹⁶ Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 (recast). OJ L 157, 20.6.2017, p. 1–21

fulfilling IOTC standards, since 2023, the quality of the declaration satisfied IOTC standards.

EU fishing activities are reported as evidenced by the EU Annual reports to IOTC, and used by EU scientific institutes and the IOTC Scientific Committee for stock assessment and evaluation of ecosystem impacts. Data supplied by EU operators to IOTC go beyond minimum requirements, in particular as a result of the voluntary 100% observer coverage implemented by EU operators to ensure full transparency of their operations.

Records of IOTC meetings available from its website show that both EU and Seychelles' delegates attended the meetings of the IOTC Scientific Committee over the past few years. Data collected on the EU purse seine fleet form an essential part of fisheries-dependent-information used by the IOTC scientific committee for the assessment of the status of key tuna stocks in the Indian Ocean

Ensuring control and compliance with EU fleet rules

The Protocol considered specific provisions for the monitoring of the EU fleet authorised to access the Seychelles fishing zone. Provisions included *inter alia* monitoring of vessel position through satellites (using VMS), timely submission of logbooks and observer reports to Seychelles, quarterly monitoring of total catch, and entry-exit notifications. The provisions of the Protocol complemented monitoring obligations imposed on flag States by the IOTC, and general monitoring and control provisions set out by the EU control system¹⁷ applicable to EU vessels wherever they operate.

One of the objectives of the Protocol was to implement an ERS aligned with the ERS implemented by the EU since 2012 for the monitoring of EU vessels wherever they operate. However, the ERS is still not implemented due to unresolved information technology issues. All parties to the SFPFA support the transition to an ERS in view of the simplification provided by the system.

The review of the minutes of the JC confirms that the EU tuna fleet has been broadly compliant with the different monitoring and surveillance measures enacted by the Protocol, with some shortcomings raised by Seychelles subsequently successfully addressed by the EU party over time.

The sectoral support programme has committed about EUR 2.9 million to date (20% of the budget programmed) on activities supporting improved monitoring of fishing fleets and control and surveillance activities. Results obtained included *inter alia* training of observers, successful trialling of the ERS and EMS on the national purse seine fleet, and organisation of seaborne and airborne patrols of the national fishing zone.

Objective: to contribute to the continuity of fishing activities by the EU distant water fleet and employment linked to fleets

¹⁷ [Link](#) to a detailed presentation of the EU Control system

To seek appropriate share of the surplus resources, fully commensurate with the EU fleets interests and their regional and sub-regional fishing strategy.

The importance of access to the Seychelles fishing zone for the EU tuna purse seine fleet is evidenced by the fact that 100% of EU tuna purse seiners active in the Indian Ocean applied for a fishing authorisation available under the Protocol and by the relatively high percentage of EU catch obtained in the Seychelles fishing zone compared to total catches in the Indian Ocean (22% on average each year). The interest in access to the Seychelles' fishing zone is compounded by the utilisation of Port Victoria as the main logistics base in the Indian Ocean for EU purse seiners.

For EU surface longliners, the results of the implementation of the first four years of the Protocol suggest lower interest in access to the Seychelles fishing zone, as was the case under the previous Protocol. Except for 2020 (when five vessels obtained a fishing authorisation), the number of EU surface longliners has been consistently low, with the average annual catch obtained in the Seychelles fishing zone representing around just 2% of their total catches in the Indian Ocean.

The records of EU annual catches in the Seychelles fishing zone show good alignment with the reference tonnage of 50 000 tonnes identified by the Protocol to determine the amount of the EU compensation for access. However, the maximum number of fishing authorisations foreseen by the Protocol (fishing opportunities for a maximum of 40 purse seiners and eight surface longliners) appears to exceed the needs of the EU fleet as evidenced by the average annual utilisation rate of 58% recorded since the start of the Protocol. A similar pattern of underutilisation of the maximum number of fishing authorisations was also observed under the previous Protocol¹⁸.

Level of fees paid by EU vessel owners for their fishing activities is fair and proportionate to costs and revenues, and non-discriminatory

Seychelles authorises access to its fishing zone under different arrangements including a bilateral government-to-government fishing agreements, fishing agreements concluded with foreign fishing associations from Taiwan and South Korea, and direct authorisations (industrial tuna vessels flagged to China, Oman and Tanzania). All fishing agreements concluded by Seychelles are transparently reported in the FiTI reports, and the results of the activities of the foreign vessels (flag, number, catch, effort) transparently reported in the annual Fisheries Report published on the Seychelle Fisheries Authority website.

From a technical perspective, a level playing field is supported by the fact that technical conditions applying to EU fishing operations are strictly identical to technical conditions applying to other foreign fleets in accordance with the IOTC conservation and management measures and the Fisheries Act (2014). The Protocol does not include technical rules that give selective dispensation from rules applicable to all other industrial tuna vessels while fishing in the Seychelles fishing zone.

¹⁸ European Commission: Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Caillart, B., Goulding, I. and Defaux, V., Ex-post and ex-ante evaluation study of the fisheries partnership agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles and of its implementing protocol – Final report, Publications Office, 2019

According to information available, non-EU purse seiners authorised to access the Seychelles fishing zone pay a flat rate of between EUR 105 000 and EUR 143 000 for purse seiners, and between EUR 27 600 and EUR 39 000 for longliners. For EU tuna vessels, the Protocol foresees an advance annual payment of EUR 56 000 for each EU purse seiner (increased to EUR 59 500 from the third year) and an advance annual payment of EUR 7 200 for each EU surface longliner (increased to EUR 7 650 from the third year). Additional access payments are due for annual catches exceeding 700 tonnes for purse seiners and 90 tonnes for surface longliners. According to our calculations, the average annual access fee paid by EU purse seiners was EUR 154 535 (additional catch included), with one EU purse seiner having paid in excess of EUR 500 000 in 2022. For EU surface longliners, the average annual access cost stayed at the level of the minimum price identified by the Protocol due to catches below the levels triggering additional payments. While the financial access conditions foreseen by the Protocol for EU operators are different from those applying to other foreign operators of industrial tuna vessels, it resulted in average access fees paid by EU purse seiners being broadly aligned with access fees paid by other foreign operators.

Ensuring supply for the EU market

Port Victoria is the main port of call for EU tuna purse seiners in the Indian Ocean. According to feedback received from operators, EU purse seiners make about 90% of their annual calls there. Between 2020 and 2023, EU purse seiners landed or transhipped close to 200 000 tonnes of tuna species in Port Victoria, about four times more than their catches in the Seychelles fishing zone.

EU purse seine tuna catches in the Indian are used as raw material for the preparation of canned tuna after processing in third countries (e.g. Seychelles, Mauritius, Madagascar) and in the EU. They satisfy about 15% of the needs of the EU market for tuna species, estimated at 1 355 667 tonnes in 2022 by the European Market Observatory for fisheries and aquaculture products (EUMOFA)¹⁹. According to the COMEXT trade database, Seychelles represented 9% of total EU imports of prepared tuna products on average between 2020 and 2023 (Mauritius 8% and Madagascar 2%).

In addition to tuna catch, EU purse seiners unload their bycatches in Port Victoria. The bycatches (2 564 tonnes landed in 2023) are sold to Seychellois' operators and most is subsequently exported to West African countries (e.g. Côte d'Ivoire).

EU purse seine operations in Port Victoria support the economic development of Seychelles through the purchase of good and services needed by the vessels (e.g. port services, handling services, routine maintenance operations for vessels and fishing equipment, crew rotation) and processing of catches by the local cannery. Seychelles might derive about EUR 8.7 million per year of indirect value added in the upstream and downstream ancillary local industries, supporting about 300 FTE jobs for Seychellois residents.

The enabling environment supported by the SFPA and its predecessors contributed to the establishment of economic links between the EU and the Seychelles seafood sector. As examples, a company registered in France owned the cannery before it was sold to Thai

¹⁹ EUMOFA (2024) – The EU fish market 2024 edition [Link](#)

operators in 2010, fishing companies registered in Spain operate Seychelles-flagged purse seiners, and a French company has invested in the cold storage facilities in Port Victoria.

taking into account specific interests: the nearby outermost regions of the EU and the EU fleet

The Protocol included fishing opportunities for the surface longline fleet based in La Réunion and Mayotte (four fishing opportunities allocated to France by the EU Council out of eight available). The number of fishing opportunities available for France, which was increased from two under the previous Protocol to four, was introduced to support the local fleet development plan which considered the introduction of freezer longliners.

However, fleet development has not materialised as expected. As a result, only one La Réunion longliner took a fishing authorisation in 2020 but did not utilise it (no catch was obtained in the Seychelles fishing zone), and no French longliners applied for a fishing authorisation. For other small-scale French longliners based in La Réunion and Mayotte, the Seychelles' fishing zone is too distant from their home ports.

Objective: Supporting the development of a sustainable fisheries sector in partner countries

3.1 Contribute to social, environmental, and economic development in Sao Tome e Principe. To what extent the SFPA and the activities implemented with the EU contribution for sectoral support, have generated significant positive / unintended / longer term / broader effects?

The multiannual budget foreseen by the Protocol (EUR 16.8 million for 2020-2026 period) has been programmed by the two parties to support three priorities areas:

- Priority area 1: Development and implementation of fisheries and aquaculture management plans (42% of the budget of the initial multiannual plan).
- Priority area 2: Fisheries infrastructure development for artisanal, industrial and aquaculture sectors (47% of the budget of the initial multiannual plan).
- Priority area 3: Capacity building (11% of the budget of the initial multiannual plan).

By November 2024, five annual tranches out of six had been disbursed by the EU (EUR 14 million)

Under priority area 1, the sectoral support programme financed various activities contributing to enhanced national capacities in terms of research to inform the development of fisheries management plans and in terms of MCS of the activities of the foreign and national fishing fleets, including the artisanal fleet. This priority area also included initiatives to support the social development of the national artisanal sector (through an insurance scheme for vessels and crew, and a pension scheme for artisanal fishers), as well as initiatives to promote fish consumption by Seychellois. In addition, activities targeted

the development of the emerging national aquaculture sector through support to research and the planned construction of facilities to produce fingerlings.

Under priority area 2, the sectoral support programme financed the development of a network of infrastructures for artisanal fishers on the islands of Mahé, Praslin and La Digue. Most landing sites financed by the sectoral support programme and the previous one are operational. In addition, this priority area covered funding of the development and maintenance of a network of ice making machines for artisanal fishers, as well as a relatively minor intervention to improve the facilities available at the industrial port.

Under priority area 3, the sectoral support financed scholarships for tertiary academic training of six staff and support for the establishment and daily operations of local associations of artisanal fishers to strengthen co-management initiatives of local fisheries and artisanal facilities built with support of the sectoral support programme (four associations strengthened, and at least three more being planned for support). In addition, this priority area of the sectoral support programme has provided support to the Seychelles Bureau of Standards (SBS - the competent authority for certification of sanitary conditions of fish products) and to the Seychelles Maritime Academy (SMA - the national entity in charge of training of seagoing personnel under the supervision of the Ministry in charge of fisheries since 2024). Support to the SMA included contributions for the maintenance of its training vessel, development of new training courses and attendance of trainees, construction of new classrooms, and acquisition of various training equipment).

The full impacts of the sectoral support programme are still to be realised and in some cases cannot be fully evaluated. However, the main results achieved so far include:

- Improvement in the availability of scientific information for the management of fisheries resources supporting design and implementation of existing management plans (Mahé Plateau) and newly developed management plans (sea-cucumber fishery, the spanner crab fishery).
- Enhanced capacities for MCS with successful trialling of the ERS and EMS on national industrial vessels, improved tracking and statistical coverage of national semi-industrial and artisanal fishing activities, and training of observers.
- Significant support to the development and professionalisation of the artisanal sector with implementation of social support schemes, structuring of the sector in local associations and deployment of a network of infrastructure offering improved facilities for unloading operations and marketing of catch, including availability of ice for conservation of fish products, and parallel promotion initiatives to broaden the demand of the local market for fish products.
- Development of human capacities of the Seychelles authorities in charge of fisheries (SFA, Ministry) through training of staff, and support to other national entities with a key role in the development of the fisheries sector (the SBS and SMA).

Promote the employment of local seafarers, improve infrastructure and encourage landings, support the third country in the development of local fisheries and

processing industry in the EU, domestic markets and those of certain third countries. Creating employment directly and indirectly.

EU purse seiners sold the equivalent of 18% of their catches in the Indian Ocean, including in the Seychelles fishing zone, to the local cannery resulting in an annual average of close to 37 000 tonnes of tuna species processed locally (and representing about 40% of the raw material processed). Supply of raw material by EU vessels is pivotal in the preparation of canned tuna and tuna loins meeting the rules of origin defined in the interim Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)²⁰ to enter the EU market quota-free and duty-free. By supplying raw material eligible for duty-free export to the EU, the SFA contributes to maintaining employment of the 1 500 workers in the cannery, the majority of whom are women.

Utilisation of Port Victoria, purchase of good and services by EU vessels from local enterprises, and sale of raw material to the local cannery are estimated to support the equivalent of 300 FTE jobs in Seychelles.

The Protocol provides for additional benefits in terms of direct employment of Seychellois crew onboard EU purse seine vessels. Chapter V of the Annex to the Protocol prescribes a minimum of two qualified nationals fishers on each EU purse seiner when operating in the Seychelles fishing zone, with specific measures to facilitate recruitment of crew by EU tuna purse seiners (*inter alia* submission of monthly lists of qualified fishers, minimum levels of training aligned with international standards, medical certificates). Working standards including remuneration are framed by a social clause referring to relevant conventions adopted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Minutes of the JC note that five Seychellois were employed as crew in 2021, six in 2022 and eight in 2023, suggesting an improvement in the number of Seychellois employed over time, but still short of the 52 Seychellois that could be considered as the target according to the Protocol (assuming 26 EU tuna purse seiners per year on average). The lack of professional experience is acknowledged by Seychelles, as candidates only received academic training at the SMA.

As a result of insufficient employment compared to the Protocol's provisions, the EU shipowners paid the penalties established by the Protocol (EUR 35 for each non-embarked seaman per day of activity in the Seychelles fishing zone), resulting in an annual average additional payment of EUR 105 000 to Seychelles. The payments are registered in the SFA budget income and used for supporting the tasks of the Authority, which include the development of the training capacities (e.g. the SFA provides funding to the SMA).

4.2. Efficiency: the desired effects are achieved at reasonable costs

For each component (access and sectoral support) success criteria have been proposed and evaluated, for efficiency.

²⁰ Interim Agreement establishing a framework for an Economic Partnership Agreement between the Eastern and Southern Africa States, on the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, on the other part. OJ L 111, 24.4.2012, p. 1–1172

Objective: to contribute to the continuity of fishing activities by the EU distant water fleet and employment linked to fleets

To what extent does the SFPA offer value-for-money to the EU?

EU annual catches in the Seychelles fishing zone have been well aligned with the annual reference tonnage of 50 000 tonnes identified by the Protocol to set the amount of the EU financial compensation for access. The annual catch of EU tuna vessels averaged 49 340 tonnes between 2020 and 2023.

As a result of EU tuna vessel catch performance in the Seychelles fishing zone, the average cost of access paid by the EU (EUR 57 per tonne) was slightly higher than the EUR 50 per tonne fixed *ex-ante*. This can be explained by the exceptionally low catch obtained in 2021 (26 964 tonnes, about half of the reference tonnage) due to oceanographic conditions having adversely affected tuna abundance and catchability in the Seychelles fishing zone in that year.

Catch data show that close to 100% of the EU catch was obtained by the average of 26 EU purse seiners utilising the fishing opportunities. This shows that the underutilisation of the maximum number of fishing opportunities did not have an impact on the efficiency of the EU investment in the access component of the Protocol.

A similar pattern was observed under the previous Protocol with good alignment between the reference tonnage of 50 000 tonnes and the catch obtained, and an absence of any negative efficiency of the EU intervention from the underutilisation of the maximum number of fishing authorisations.

To what extent does the Protocol offer value-for-money to the EU ship-owners?

The economic and social analysis of the access component provided in evaluation report (p23) concludes that EU tuna vessel operations in the Seychelles fishing zone have generated a positive gross profit of EUR 3.2 million per year on average. The gross profit generated represents 4% of the income, which is low in comparison with the economic performance of the EU fishing fleet (13.6% for the EU distant water fleet as a whole in 2022)²¹. The economic difficulties faced by the EU purse seine fleet are evidenced by recent restructuring / cessation of some fishing companies.

Comparison with the economic performance of the EU tuna fleet under the previous Protocol shows that gross profit decreased by 73% between the two Protocol periods, as a result of relatively constant fish prices at the same time as increasing costs, including operating costs, crew remuneration and access fees (a 40% increase between the two Protocols). Access costs, which represented 5% of income and 12% value added under the previous Protocol, now represent 6% of income and 16% of value added.

²¹ European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Scientific Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) - The 2024 Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet (STECF 24-03 & STECF 24-07), Prellezo, R, Sabatella, E.C., Virtanen, J., Tardy Martorell, M. and Guillen, J. editor(s), Publication Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, doi: 10.2760/461821

To what extent is the financial compensation for the fishing possibilities under the Agreement advantageous for the EU and for Seychelles?

The analysis of the economic impacts of the Protocol shows that the EU received 36% of the total value-added, Seychelles 29% and 34% of value-added benefiting to other third countries. The share of value-added accruing to Seychelles increased by 3% compared to the previous Protocol, probably as a result of increased access costs, including the newly introduced contribution to the national environmental fund. The economic value-added benefiting Seychelles is composed of EU access payments (42%), upstream gross value-added (27%), downstream gross value-added (23%) and port taxes (6%) (see page 27 of the evaluation report).

The share of value-added accruing to Seychelles may be explained by the fact that 82% of EU purse seine catches in the Indian Ocean are transhipped for processing in other countries, and to a lesser extent, by the relatively low number of Seychellois nationals employed on EU vessels.

Objective: Supporting the development of a sustainable fisheries sector in partner countries

To what extent is all the EU contribution, in particular, its sectoral support, proportional to the needs of Seychelles and their absorption capacity?

In 2019, the SFA became a financially autonomous authority, with all payments for access being direct budget income for the organisation, including the EU and EU shipowners' contribution for access, the EU contribution for sectoral support, the contributions to the environmental fund, and the compensations for non-embarkation of seamen. The reform of the SFA showed the political willingness of Seychelles to invest in the development of its national fisheries sector.

Total SFA average annual income between 2020 and 2023 was EUR 17.5 million, with EU total payments under the Protocol representing on average 58% of annual income, with the EU contribution for sectoral support alone being 16% of SFA income (EUR 2.8 million per year)

The records of the financial execution of the EU contribution for sectoral support show that it is in line with the absorption capacity of the SFA. The budgets of each annual tranche have been utilised according to the foreseen calendar at the satisfaction of the JC. For all tranches, there was no need to modify the annual programming.

To what extent has the sectoral support payments been made in due time and according to Articles 4 of the current Protocol?

The sectoral support payments have been released by the EU as foreseen by the Protocol based on the rules agreed between the two parties in the implementing guidelines (i.e. payments are released if the financial execution of the previous tranche reaches 75% of the amount available). In November 2024 (the fifth year of the Protocol), five out of six tranches were authorised by the JC for payment.

As a result of the financial autonomy granted to SFA, sectoral support payments are readily available for execution. Budget execution is properly monitored by SFA and results are shared with the JC.

The submission of annual reports on the implementation of the sectoral support programme, as mandated by Article 4.6 of the Protocol and further specified by the sectoral support guidelines approved by the two parties, did not fully meet expectations. There was no report for the first annual tranche (2020) for understandable reasons (impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbated in the case of island States), and only the report on the implementation of the third annual tranche (2023) was submitted prior to the Joint Committee. The reports submitted by Seychelles were concise narrative reports (around 10 pages) detailing activities implemented, results obtained, and problems encountered.

4.3. Coherence: the alignment of the Protocol intervention logic with EU other interventions with similar objectives

For each component (access and sectoral support) success criteria have been proposed and evaluated.

How coherent is the Protocol with CFP in general and with its external dimension and the regional fisheries policy?

The SFPA between the EU and Seychelles and its current implementing Protocol are consistent with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), particularly Articles 31 and 32 of the EU CFP Regulation²². The SFPA and its Protocol:

- include the fundamental principles of governance of fisheries agreements (respect for democratic principles and human rights, transparency, non-discrimination between fleets, and the exclusivity clause);
- identify fishing opportunities that are aligned with the Conservation Management Measures adopted by the IOTC;
- provide specific financial support for the support and implementation of the Seychelles' sectoral fisheries and aquaculture policy, which includes *inter alia* enhanced national capacities for management research and control, and support to the development of the national artisanal fishing sector (the sectoral support component);
- contribute to maintaining the activity of the EU tuna purse seiner fleet in the region through a network of agreements that allow vessels of different categories to access a continuum of fishing zones including the fishing zones of Seychelles, Madagascar and Mauritius, and the adjacent high sea areas.

²² Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC. OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22–61

The SFPA with Seychelles is part of a regional network of agreements which is effectively used by the EU tuna purse seine fleet active in the Indian Ocean.

The coherence of the SFPA with the CFP is further strengthened by Article 9 of the SFPA on regional cooperation. The review of the minutes of the JC meetings show that the two parties effectively included a point in the agenda of each meeting for bilateral discussions on regional management issues under the mandate of the IOTC. These discussions have been useful to explain positions, and complement the bilateral exchanges organised prior to, or in the margins of, key IOTC statutory meetings.

The social provisions governing employment onboard EU tuna purse seiners do not capture progresses achieved through social dialogue at EU level. They will need to be updated.

To what extent is the Protocol and its implementation consistent and coherent and complements with the other EU policies and legislation?

Several other EU interventions benefited the Seychelles' fisheries and aquaculture sectors:

- Support to the implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) funded by the 11th European Development Fund (EDF). Activities implemented under this programme contributed to strengthening governance, and to improve the performance of Seychelles in export markets.
- Activities implemented under the Ecofish EU regional programme (budget of EUR 28 million) funded under the 11th EDF. Seychelles benefited from interventions under the national chapter including support to Monitoring Control and Surveillance capacities.
- Inspections of EU tuna purse seiners in Port Victoria (two inspection campaigns in 2024) coordinated by the European Fisheries Control Agency²³. Seychellois inspectors joined the EU inspection team to observe the application of the inspection procedures, contributing to capacity building through sharing of good practices.

All these activities were coordinated by the Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy and the SFA. They complement the activities implemented under the sectoral support programme. Other EU initiatives benefiting Seychelles contributed to the strengthening of the Monitoring Control and Surveillance and research capacities, and to establishing an enabling environment for the development of the fish marketing / processing sectors, including the promotion of exports to the EU.

In what ways are the Agreement and Protocol consistent with the national fisheries policy and are well coordinated with regional fisheries policies and the EU cooperation?

²³ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1986 of 13 December 2018 establishing specific control and inspection programs for certain fisheries and repealing Implementing Decisions 2012/807/EU, 2013/328/EU, 2013/305/EU and 2014/156/EU. C/2018/8461. OJ L 317, 14.12.2018, p. 29–46

The national sectoral policy for the fisheries sector is framed by the Seychelles Fisheries Sector Policy and Strategy approved in 2019²⁴, and is complemented by the national aquaculture policy updated in 2023. National sectoral policies are operationalised by the SFA in the line with its strategic plan 2022-2027.

The identification of the multiannual sectoral programme was led by the SFA, and priority areas and activities were selected to support the SFA strategic plan.

The sectoral support programme is fully consistent with the Seychelles' fisheries and aquaculture policies implemented according to the SFA Strategic Plan 2022-2027, guiding the contributions of the Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy to the overarching sustainable development objectives of the country.

The Protocol's activities contribute to the achievement of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 (life below waters) and in particular to the achievement of its targets 14.2 (protect and restore ecosystems), 14.4 (sustainable fishing), 14.7 (increased benefits to Small Islands Developing States), 14.a (increase scientific knowledge) and 14b (provide access for small-scale fishers).

4.4. Added-value: How did the EU intervention make a difference and to whom?

For each component (access and sectoral support) success criteria have been proposed and evaluated.

What is the additional value resulting from the EU intervention under the Protocol, compared to the absence of Agreement/Protocol? To what extent would Member States have had the ability or possibility to put in place appropriate alternative measures? To what extent the overall benefits of the Agreement and Protocol have an added value for the EU?

In the absence of an SFPA, Seychelles could have engaged in direct private agreements with EU operators, as they do with other foreign operators. Compared to this alternative, the EU intervention adds value in terms of the following features of the Agreement, which would have been difficult, if not impossible to generate under private access arrangements negotiated by EU operators through:

- Multiannual access agreement aligned with the needs of the EU tuna fleet providing visibility to the country in terms of budget income (private access arrangements are on an annual basis with their actual utilisation largely unpredictable).
- An official platform for sectoral dialogue and direct exchanges between the EU and Seychelles, in terms of bilateral cooperation and a framework for joint monitoring and control of EU activities.

²⁴ Seychelles Fisheries Sector Policy and Strategy (2019) [Link](#)

- Embedding in the SFPA and its implementing Protocol the four key governance principles promoted by the EU at the global level (respect for human rights, transparency, level-playing field, and exclusivity of the SFPA over private arrangements).
- Coherence with EU policies in terms of national and regional development.
- Provision of a dedicated SFPA budget line (sectoral support) decoupled from the SFPA access budget line, for EU financial support to implementation of national fisheries policy by Seychelles.

Compared to any other mechanism for gaining fisheries access for EU tuna vessels, the Agreement has delivered a wide range of valuable benefits to both the EU and Seychelles, in terms of governance, sustainability and national development. There is a strong added-value of the EU intervention through SFPA mechanisms for access and sectoral support.

What is the added value resulting from the EU intervention under the Agreement and the Protocol, compared to what could be achieved by the Union fleet outside the framework of the Agreement?

The current Protocol provides stable and guaranteed lawful access to the Seychelles fishing zone over a 6-year period, which is supportive of the multi-annual deployment strategy of EU purse seine vessel operators in the Indian Ocean. No stakeholders consulted suggested preference for private agreements over the framework provided by the SFPA.

4.5. Acceptability

For each component (access and sectoral support) success criteria have been proposed and evaluated.

To what extent are the EU ship-owners satisfied with the Protocol?

Feedback from consultations show that EU purse seine operators support the renewal of the Protocol with broadly similar conditions in terms of the technical clauses governing access (including embarkation of Seychellois fishers and contribution to the national environmental fund). EU purse seine operators are not opposed to an adjustment in access costs, but stressed that these would have to be reasonable given: i) the fragile financial situation of the fishing companies due to external shocks; and ii) Seychelles' ambitions in relation to Marine Spatial Planning which may result in new restrictions on activities in certain areas of the Seychelles fishing zone.

To what extent is the Protocol developed in consultation, coordination and supported by the civil society in the EU and nationally and locally?

Representatives of the civil society in Seychelles acknowledged the key role of the EU in the development of fisheries infrastructure for artisanal fishers. Discussions with users of the facilities present at the different sites during the mission confirmed awareness about the EU support. Communication by the SFA about the development of the fisheries infrastructure programme and the visibility of EU involvement on commemorative plaques was probably pivotal to ensure awareness by the broader public.

For the other activities implemented under the sectoral support, all representatives of civil society consulted in the EU and in Seychelles confirmed an absence of information about the sectoral support programme, and a lack of consultations on the design / specification of the multiannual programme and its implementing annual programme. Improved transparency over this component of the SFPA is requested by them, as well as opportunities for consultation and involvement in the implementation of some activities as appropriate.

To what extent is the Protocol supported by the sector (shipowners and processors) in the EU and in the partner country, nationally and locally?

The contribution of EU tuna vessels to the economy of the national fishing industry is acknowledged, including the contribution to the emerging local market for bycatch; however, the communication about the interactions between EU tuna fleets and artisanal fleets should be improved.

Representatives of the artisanal sector and local environmental NGOs commented negatively on the occurrence of lost Fishing Aggregating Devices (FADs) encountered at sea or stranded on the islands. The issue is not attributable solely to the EU fleet as all purse seiners active in the Indian Ocean use FADs, but these comments support the relevance of the FAD collection programme supported by the contribution to the national environmental fund paid by all purse seiners authorised to fish in the Seychelles fishing zone.

To what extent the administration, stakeholders and society are in general satisfied with the Protocol?

The interview undertaken for the evaluation report indicate that the overall performance of the Protocol was positive. There was no perceived reticence from Seychelles regarding the principle of negotiations for the renewal of the Protocol after 2026.

Nothing in the language of the current text of the Protocol including its technical Annex raised any particular concern or focus for negotiation of the access component of a future Protocol. Seychelles authorities outlined the need to ensure full implementation of the technical provisions of the Protocol (in particular the ERS and employment of Seychellois fishers), and suggested a possible revision of the financial components of the Protocol.

4.6. Relevance: Is the intervention still relevant?

For each component (access and sectoral support) success criteria have been proposed and evaluated.

To what extent the objectives of the SFPA still correspond to the needs of EU shipowners and of Seychelles?

The fact that 100% of EU purse seiners active in the Indian Ocean applied for fishing authorisations suggests that access to the Seychelles fishing zone met the needs of this fleet segment to support its fishing strategy. The interviews during the evaluation confirmed that the EU purse seine operators have a continued interest in access to the Seychelles fishing zone in view of the strategic location of the archipelago at the centre of the distribution of tropical tuna species, coupled with the attractiveness of Port Victoria given its port services.

For EU surface longliners, the continued relevance of the SFPA is difficult to establish in view of the low utilisation of the fishing opportunities under the current Protocol and the previous one.

For Seychelles, the SFPA supports the activities of the port and of the cannery through port calls by EU vessels and supply of tuna products eligible for duty-free and quota-free export to the EU. The SFPA contributes to the development of an enabling environment for the development of external trade. After the tourism industry, the fishing industry is the second most important sector of the economy, contributing 8% of the national GDP and 83% of national exports of goods²⁵. A recent research article²⁶ confirmed the pivotal role of the fishing sector in supporting resilience to external shocks. This study showed that the fishing industry in Seychelles was instrumental in offsetting the loss of tourism services during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the fish processing industry supplied by industrial purse seine fleets showed strong resilience to the pandemic with an increase in exports of more than 20% in volume terms and 40% in value in 2020.

How is the Agreement relevant to the policy objectives of RFMOs?

The objectives of the Agreement and Protocol are to promote responsible fishing in the Seychelles fishing zone, in accordance with the principles of good economic and social governance. These objectives are consistent with the objectives of the IOTC, as set out in Article 5 of its charter²⁷ *“The Commission shall promote co-operation among its Members with a view to ensuring, through appropriate management, the conservation and optimum utilization of stocks covered by this Agreement and encouraging sustainable development of fisheries based on such stocks.”* For both the EU and Seychelles, the Protocol includes provisions which support the objectives of resource and environmental sustainability. In particular, it makes provision for catch reporting, strengthening Monitoring Control and Surveillance and the observer scheme, and requires vessels to comply with the laws of Seychelles relating to fishing activities, as well as with the Conservation Management Measures adopted by the IOTC. The sectoral support component of the SFPA includes activities contributing to the capacities of Seychelles to comply with the obligations stemming from its IOTC membership.

The relevance of the SFPA to the policy objectives of the IOTC is further underpinned by a provision in the SFPA (Article 9) on regional cooperation. This provision gives both parties the opportunity to use the bilateral framework of the SFPA to exchange views on specific issues in relation to regional management of tuna resources.

²⁵ Central Bank of Seychelles. Annual Report 2023. [Link](#)

²⁶ Guillotreau, P., Antoine, S., Bistoquet, K., Chassot, E., Rassool, K. (2023) How fisheries can support a small island economy in pandemic times: the Seychelles case. *Aquat. Living Resour.* 36, 24.

²⁷ Agreement for the Establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), <http://www.iotc.org/>

5. WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED?

5.1. Main conclusions

This analysis confirms that continuing to implement the Agreement through the conclusion of a new implementing protocol is the most appropriate policy option. By comparison, not negotiating a new protocol does not meet any of the needs of the two parties.

The current Protocol after four years of implementation shows that it met the main objectives:

- For objective 1, the Protocol provided an effective contribution towards resource conservation and environmental sustainability. The contribution of the SFPA to environmental sustainability was amplified by the allocation of about 20% of the budget of the sectoral support programme to activities supporting improved MCS of fishing fleets by Seychelles, and by the financial contribution paid by EU shipowners to the national environmental fund created in 2020 (which has been used for collection of lost FADs and fishing equipment stranded on the islands of the archipelago),
- For objective 2, the Protocol effectively supported the continuation of the fishing activity of the EU long distance fleet in the Indian Ocean. The Seychelles fishing zone is important for EU tuna purse seiners as evidenced by the proportion of total annual catches in the Indian Ocean obtained in the area (22% on average) and the fact that 100% of EU purse seiners active in the Indian Ocean utilised the fishing opportunities available.
- For objective 3, the SFPA offers a framework to foster EU landings in Port Victoria (18% of total catches unloaded in Port Victoria are sold to the local cannery), and makes an important contribution to the supply of the EU market for processed tuna products. Fishing activities by EU tuna vessels have been profitable, but the profitability margins decreased compared to the previous Protocol as a result of stagnating fish prices and increasing operating costs, including fuel and access costs. Seychelles' share of the value-added generated by EU fishing activities increased compared to the previous Protocol (from 24% to 29%).

5.2. Lessons learned

The ex-post evaluation of the Protocol implementing the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement for the period 2020-2026 shows that the Protocol has generally succeeded in achieving its main objectives.

In terms of the lessons learned, a new protocol will nevertheless have to introduce some adjustments to address the shortcomings, namely:

- The low utilisation of the maximum number of fishing opportunities available, in particular by the EU longline fleet segment;
- The unsuccessful implementation of the ERS which would allow Seychelles to receive in near-real time declarations and notifications from EU vessels in an electronic format;
- The low numbers of Seychellois fishers employed onboard EU vessels compared to the expectations of the Protocol;
- The communication and reporting of the activities implemented within the sectoral support programme have not been optimum in highlighting the quality of the results obtained. Lack of information and involvement of the civil society on the activities implemented under the sectoral support multi annual programme.
- Finally, the under-performance of communication and visibility of the benefits of the Agreement and the current implementing Protocol towards the civil society of Seychelles, as well as civil society in the EU.

6. EX-ANTE EVALUATION

The ex-ante evaluation of the current implementing Protocol provides a forward-looking perspective that is complementary to the ex-post evaluation. Expressly, it reflects on the lessons learned and outlines the possible ways forward, through a set of available policy options, for the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and Seychelles.

6.1. Problem analysis and needs assessment

In the context of the intervention logic in Figure 2, this section outlines the possible current and future needs of both Parties to the current implementing Protocol and the Agreement.

6.2. Current and future needs of Seychelles

Seychelles' fisheries sector is the second pillar of the national economy after the tourism industry. Return from the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated its instrumental role in enhancing the resilience of the country to such external shocks.

Seychelles needs to further diversify the national economy by strengthening the development of the national fisheries and aquaculture sectors. According to the national sectoral policies, priorities are to further develop shore-based industrial activities (tuna processing, services to fishing vessels) to increase the share of value-added captured by the country, and to ensure food security for the population through the sustainable development of the national artisanal fishing sector and of the aquaculture sector.

Seychelles needs to derive economic benefits from the attractiveness of the national fishing zone given its location at the centre of the distribution of tropical tuna species in the Indian Ocean. The establishment of access arrangements with third parties, including the EU, generates budget income, but also underpins the attractiveness of Port Victoria which supports significant additional socio-economic benefits for the country.

In view of its key role as flag State, coastal State and port State in the Indian Ocean, Seychelles needs resources to ensure adequate implementation of the IOTC Conservation and Management Measures aimed at establishing sustainable fishing conditions for exploitation of highly migratory stocks of the Indian Ocean as well as all the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance requirements.

6.3. Current and future need for the European Union

The EU needs to secure and/or maintain fishing opportunities for the EU tuna fleet in the Indian Ocean, in international waters and in waters under the jurisdiction of coastal states, depending on EU fleet interests.

As a flag State and coastal State, the EU is committed to contributing to the sustainable management of fish stocks in the Indian Ocean in its capacity as a contracting party to the IOTC.

As a development partner, the EU needs to ensure that coastal States in the Indian Ocean, have the capacities to sustainably manage their fisheries and to combat IUU fishing, thereby contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 14 relating to Life below Water.

The EU needs to conserve a legal instrument to monitor the activities of EU vessels while fishing in the Seychelles fishing zone, and to ensure that the fleet complies with applicable binding regional conservation and management measures adopted through IOTC and by Seychelles for fishing activities taking place in the area under national jurisdiction.

For EU operators of fishing vessels

EU purse seine operators deploy their activities in the Indian Ocean. EU purse seiners have fishing opportunities granted to them by the IOTC, but need to secure access to fishing areas under coastal States' jurisdiction to follow tuna stocks as they migrate. EU operators' deployment strategies need therefore to be backed by stable multiannual access arrangements offering legal security.

For EU consumers and processors

EU fishing fleet activities in the Indian Ocean, including in the Seychelles fishing zone, supply 15% of EU consumers' needs for the supply of processed tuna products. EU fishing activities result in flow of catch to the EU after processing in Seychelles, in the EU and in other third countries, confirming a need in the future for a continued supply of tuna from

the Seychelles fishing zone caught by the EU fleet in the form of processed tuna products or in the form of raw material for processing in the EU.

6.4. Current and future needs for Seychelles and the European Union

Both parties need a platform for bilateral sectoral dialogue with dedicated funding to ensure the promotion of fisheries governance in the Seychelles fishing zone, in synergy with other EU interventions in the region, allowing them to promote responsible fishing practices, including initiatives to combat IUU fishing. A platform for bilateral sectoral dialogue is also instrumental for cooperating on regional matters of common interest, such as those discussed within the multilateral context of the IOTC.

6.5. The EU added-value

Should the Protocol be renewed, only the EU is competent to negotiate in accordance with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

Beyond this obligation stemming from the TFEU, the involvement of the EU in the negotiation of a new Protocol brings a clear added value similar to that identified in the ex-post part of the evaluation. This is related to:

- Protection of the benefits achieved by the Protocol, given that a failure to agree a new Protocol would result in no-fishing activity in the Seychelles fishing zone by EU vessels, and a cessation of financial contributions received by Seychelles for access and for the support and implementation of the national sectoral fisheries and aquaculture policies and related policies.
- Ensuring that the Protocol and its implementation comply with international applicable legal instruments (in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea -UNCLOS and the Convention C188 on work in fishing of the International Labour Organization), and with the guiding principles enshrined in Articles 31 and 32 of the EU Common Fisheries Policy Regulation, including the inclusion in the instrument of the four governance principles applicable to EU fisheries agreements²⁸.
- The possibility for the EU to promote responsible fishing practices at sub-regional level through leverage effects associated with a network of coherent fisheries agreements in Indian Ocean²⁹.

²⁸ Respect for human rights and democratic principles / transparency of the fisheries management framework / level playing field for fishing operators / exclusivity of the SFPA over private access agreements for EU vessels

²⁹ End of 2024, the EU had four fisheries agreements: Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Mozambique, the last one being dormant

- Ensuring that the Protocol and its implementation comply with the measures adopted through regional governance instruments (e.g. IOTC conservation and management measures).
- Providing a stable and multiannual legal framework for EU vessel access thus supporting their exploitation strategies in a transparent manner.
- Providing a legal mandate to the EU for monitoring EU fishing vessel activities in the Seychelles fishing zone (role of “supra-national administration” for the European Commission).
- Providing a tailored bilateral instrument for cooperation in the fisheries sector with Seychelles and support for implementation of Seychelles’ sectoral fisheries and aquaculture policies, which are additional to other EU regional initiatives aimed at strengthening the fisheries governance framework and the development of the blue economy.

The ex-post evaluation of the current Protocol confirmed the added-value of the EU involvement in the intervention.

6.6. Policy and Management objectives

The objectives of fisheries agreements are guided by Articles 31 and 32 of the CFP Regulation, taking into account the 2012 Council conclusions³⁰ on the external dimension of the CFP. In line with EU policy on fisheries agreements, the objectives of future intervention under the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement concluded between the EU and Seychelles in 2020 must be based on the general and specific objectives which guide the EU’s intervention logic for all FPAs and SFPAs, namely:

General objective 1: Contributions are made to resource conservation and environmental sustainability through rational and sustainable exploitation of living marine resources of Seychelles and in the broader Indian Ocean.

Specific objectives (SO) in support of general objective 1 are:

- ✓ SO1.1: access is facilitated for the EU fishing fleet to exploit fishing opportunities granted to the EU by the IOTC while reinforcing transparency over all fishing effort in Seychelles’ waters.
- ✓ SO1.2: the same principles and standards promoting fisheries management are followed as applied in EU waters.

³⁰ Council conclusions on the external dimension of the CFP. 19.03.2012, 7086/12

- ✓ SO1.3: the scientific and technical evaluation of the fisheries concerned is improved (notably by improving data collection and transparency on fishing efforts).
- ✓ SO1.4: compliance and combating IUU fishing is ensured.

General objective 2: Contributions are made to the continued activity of the EU fleets and the employment linked to them operating within SFPAs.

Specific objectives (SO) in support of general objective 2 are:

- ✓ SO2.1: fishing opportunities are provided for highly migratory resources available in the Seychelles fishing zone, fully commensurate with the EU fleets' interests.
- ✓ SO2.2: the level of fees payable by EU operators for their fishing activities is fair, non-discriminatory and commensurate with the benefits provided through the access conditions, while avoiding any discriminatory treatment towards EU vessels and promoting a level playing field among fleets from different countries.
- ✓ SO2.3: supply for the EU and for the markets of certain developing countries is ensured.
- ✓ SO2.4: the creation of a secure environment is encouraged that is favourable for private investment and economic activities.

General objective 3: The development of a sustainable fisheries sector in Seychelles is supported.

Specific objectives (SO) in support of general objective 3 are:

- ✓ SO3.1: contributions are made to the capacity building in Seychelles (notably by improving monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing activities, and scientific research).
- ✓ SO 3.2: support is provided to Seychelles in developing sustainable national fisheries, including artisanal fisheries in the different islands of the archipelago.

6.7. Policy options, including associated risks

Two options are available:

- Option 1: A modified, improved and renewed protocol

- Option 2: Non-renewal of the Protocol.

The information obtained from meetings of the Joint Committee and collected during the evaluation shows that both parties are willing to identify ways of improving the overall effectiveness of the Protocol.

Option 1: a modified, improved and renewed Protocol

This option takes account of potential adjustments based on the ex-post evaluation. Under this option, the main following main provisions of the current Protocol would remain unchanged:

- A new Protocol lasts for six years.
- Fishing authorisation fees applicable to EU shipowners comprising a fixed non-refundable payment, and additional payments for catches above 700 tonnes for EU tuna purse seiners and 90 tonnes for EU surface longliners
- EU shipowners' contribution to the national fund for environmental management and observation of marine ecosystems in Seychelles
- Monitoring, control and surveillance requirements (e.g. catch reporting, observer and VMS requirements) all remain as per the current Protocol
- Employment of at least two qualified Seychellois nationals on each EU tuna purse seiner during trips in the Seychelles fishing zone with guidelines defining minimum standards for candidates
- A specific EU contribution for the support and implementation of Seychelles fisheries and aquaculture policies, and related policies, to provide funding for a six-year multiannual programme, with payments conditional on the achievement of the expected results as assessed by Joint Committee meetings to take place at least once a year.

Compared to the current Protocol, the following modifications are proposed:

- Number of fishing opportunities adjusted to reflect the number of EU tuna vessels active in the tropical area of the Indian Ocean, and the likely outcomes of the restructuring of the EU tuna fishing fleet.
- Enhanced joint control and surveillance programmes, including to reflect the new Commission implementing regulation (EU) 2024/1474³¹

³¹ [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1474 of 24 May 2024 laying down rules for the application of Article 14\(4\), point \(a\), of the Council Regulation \(EC\) No 1224/2009 as regards](#)

- Enhanced guidelines for engaging Seychellois fishers onboard EU vessels to ensure that candidates are better informed about practical work on board industrial tuna purse seiners.
- An updated social clause based on Directive (EU) 2017/159³², aligned with the clause proposed by the EU to third country partners for each new /renewed SFPFA and Protocol negotiated since July 2024
- A disbursement of the Sectoral support restricted to the protocol's duration
- A Sectoral support detailed implementing rules annexed to the protocol.

The main risks associated with option 1 are:

- EU catches below the reference tonnage of 50 000 tonnes as a result of i) the restructuring of the EU tuna fleet, ii) naturally variable oceanographic conditions in the Seychelles fishing zone and iii) new restrictions on tuna purse seine fishing activities resulting from the implementation by Seychelles of the Marine Spatial Plan (MSP)³³
- Actual employment of Seychellois fishers onboard EU tuna purse seiners still short of the objectives due to a continuing mismatch between Seychelles' offer in terms of its qualified workforce and the crewing needs of the EU vessels

Option 2: Non-renewal of the Protocol

Under this option, the Protocol would not be renewed:

- If the SFPFA remained in force, EU shipowners would be prevented from negotiating access due to the exclusivity principle, with Article 5.3 of the SPFA stating that Seychelles authorities shall issue fishing authorisations to EU vessels exclusively under the Agreement. There would be no sectoral support to Seychelles provided by the EU. There would thus be no financial contributions paid by the EU and EU shipowners to Seychelles if the Protocol was not renewed and the SFPFA

[derogation from the margin of tolerance in estimating catches for unsorted landings and transshipments from small pelagic, industrial and tropical tuna purse seiners fisheries](#)

³² Council Directive (EU) 2017/159 of 19 December 2016 implementing the Agreement concerning the implementation of the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 of the International Labour Organisation, concluded on 21 May 2012 between the General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives in the European Union (Cogeca), the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) and the Association of National Organisations of Fishing Enterprises in the European Union (Europêche) (Text with EEA relevance.). OJ L 25, 31.1.2017, p. 12–35

³³ Chassot, E., P. Guillotreau, and B. Gastineau. 2018. Economic value assessment of Seychelles tuna fisheries. Publication prepared for The Nature Conservancy. Submitted to the Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan Initiative and Government of Seychelles. [Link](#)

remained dormant, representing a loss of annual budget income of EUR 10.1 million for the SFA (58% of average annual income over 2020-2023).

- Alternatively, the SFPA could be denounced. There would be no sectoral support to Seychelles provided by the EU, but this denunciation would allow EU tuna vessels to negotiate direct fishing authorisations with the authorities of Seychelles. The issuance of these authorisations would be subject to the rules set out by Regulation (EU) 2017/2403³⁴ which provides the European Commission with a mandate to oversee the process. While allowing access for EU tuna vessels, denunciation would not provide them with the stable and multiannual legal framework of a fisheries agreement. However, denunciation is highly unlikely as the absence of an implementing Protocol is not one of the reasons for termination of the SFPA foreseen in Article 17 of the Agreement. Furthermore, denunciation would send a negative signal impacting the quality of the cooperation between Seychelles and the EU.

The risks from this option are:

- Difficulties for the EU purse seine fleet to maintain viable operations according to current deployment strategies, further impacting the financial viability of the fleet
- Incentive for the EU purse seine fleet to reflag to other countries of the Indian Ocean, to keep an access to the Seychelles fishing zone, resulting in negative impacts on the self-sufficiency ratio of the EU market for tuna products, on the influence of the EU as flag State in the Indian Ocean and on the objective of the IOTC if countries selected for reflagging have objected key resolutions for the conservation of tropical tuna.
- Decreased attractiveness of Port Victoria as main logistics base for the EU purse seine fleet due to absence of fishing opportunities in the Seychelles fishing zone
- Budget shortage for the SFA impacting the capacity of the country to implement the national sectoral policies according to policy objectives
- A damage to EU-Seychelles geo-political relations.

6.8. Results and impacts

6.8.1. Environmental-Economic-Social impacts

The following table compare the different options in terms of their environmental, economic and social impacts. The impacts remain essentially qualitative. For option 1, the different benefits would only be revealed following negotiations, and would also be based on utilisation of fishing opportunities by EU tuna vessels. This in turn would depend on

³⁴ Regulation (EU) 2017/2403 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2017 on the sustainable management of external fishing fleets, and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1006/2008. OJ L 347, 28.12.2017, p. 81–104

the availability of tuna in the Seychelles fishing zone for which previous experience demonstrates unpredictability from one year to the next.

Criteria / Option	Option 1 : a modified, improved and renewed Protocol	Option 2: non-renewal of the Protocol
Environmental impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of fisheries-dependent scientific data in relation to EU purse seine activities in the Seychelles fishing zone • Availability of multiannual sources of funding (sectoral support) to implement research activities supporting the development of fisheries management plans • Availability of multiannual sources of funding (sectoral support) to support national capacities for monitoring, control and surveillance and for fighting IUU fishing • Availability of EU contributions to the national environmental fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less fisheries dependent scientific data available • Less funds available to Seychelles for implementing research activities and to monitor and control fishing activities taking place in the EEZ • Less funds available for environmental protection (e.g. collection of lost FADs and fishing gears) • Enhanced attractiveness of flags of countries of the Indian Ocean having objected key IOTC CMMs for the conservation of tropical tunas (e.g. Res. 21/01 and 24/02)
Economic impacts	<p>EU party</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment of a financial contribution to the Seychelles from the EU budget (amount depends on the outcomes of the negotiation. It was EUR 5.3 million per year under the current Protocol) • Economic value added benefiting the EU as a result of the activities of the EU purse seiners in the Seychelles fishing zone (value will depend on the values of catch obtained and operating costs) 	<p>EU party</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy for the EU budget (EUR 5.3 million per year under the current Protocol) • Negative impacts on the economic performance of the EU purse seine fleet if fishing opportunities lost in the Seychelles fishing zone cannot be replaced by fishing opportunities elsewhere

Criteria / Option	Option 1 : a modified, improved and renewed Protocol		Option 2: non-renewal of the Protocol	
	Seychelles		Seychelles	
Social impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiannual budget income stream from EU payments (EU and EU shipowners) – amounts depend on the outcome of the negotiation. It was EUR 10.1 million per year on average under the current Protocol • EU financial compensation to support and implementation of the National sectoral policy available to foster the economic development of the fisheries sector, in particular the artisanal sector 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of multiannual budget income stream from EU payments (EU and EU shipowners) • Reduced indirect economic benefits resulting from decreased attractiveness of Port Victoria for the EU fleet (port services, sales of tuna and bycatch to local operators) – Indirect economic benefits derived by Seychelles were EUR 8.7 million per year under the current Protocol • Decreased capacity of Seychelles to diversify its national economy 	
	EU party <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment of EU nationals onboard EU purse seiners secured by availability of fishing opportunities 		EU party <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible negative impacts on employment onboard the EU purse seine fleet if fishing opportunities lost in the Seychelles fishing zone cannot be replaced by fishing opportunities elsewhere 	
	Seychelles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding available for accompanying the social development of the national artisanal sector • Some Seychellois nationals employed onboard EU tuna purse seiners • Employment conditions of Seychelles fishers and other nationals' onboard EU vessels framed by an improved social clause 		Seychelles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less funding available for activities supporting the social development of artisanal fisheries in Seychelles • Decreased indirect employment opportunities in upstream and downstream industries • Employment of Seychellois fishers by foreign operators less committed and invested in the promotion of fair working conditions 	

7. COMPARISON ACCORDING TO STANDARD EVALUATION CRITERIA (RELEVANCE, EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY AND COHERENCE)

The table on this page compares the different options in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and coherence.

Option 1: a modified, improved and renewed Protocol	Option 2: non-renewal of the Protocol
<u>Relevance to needs</u> – High . Meets the needs of stakeholders in the EU and Seychelles with improved proportionality of the number of fishing authorisations compared to status quo	<u>Relevance to needs</u> – Low . Would not meet the needs of either the EU or Seychelles
<u>Effectiveness</u> – High . The modified / improved Protocol provides basis for enhanced social protection of crew members employed onboard EU vessels due to better alignment with EU working standards in fisheries	<u>Effectiveness</u> – Low . Absence of funding and of EU fishing activities in the Seychelles fishing zone will cancel out most opportunities to achieve the results expected by the SFPA. EU-Seychelles cooperation in the fisheries sector will be possible only under the general framework of the EU-ACP cooperation dialogue and instruments (essentially deployed at regional level for fisheries issues in the Indian Ocean), and within the multilateral IOTC framework.
<u>Efficiency</u> – Cannot be evaluated ex-ante The efficiency of the intervention depends on the relationship between the budgets identified under the next Protocol and the actual levels of activity of the EU fleet; as well as the results obtained through implementation of the sectoral support component. <u>However</u> , adaptation of the reference tonnage to factor in forecasted decreasing number of EU tuna purse seiners and Seychelles MSP impacts on fishing activities may underpin better performance compared to status quo	<u>Efficiency</u> - n/a No use of EU budget in this case
<u>Coherence</u> – High . Protocol makes it possible to coherently implement both the objectives of the CFP, including with respect to social standards, and those of the EU development policy while enabling Seychelles to implement its national and regional priorities.	<u>Coherence</u> – Low Without a Protocol, the EU will have less resources to implement the sub-regional strategy according to the principles of the CFP. Seychelles economic status of high-income country prevents allocation of significant EU contribution for development.
<u>EU added value</u> – High . The involvement of the EU is an obligation resulting from the existence of the SFPA concluded in 2020 and of its exclusive competence in fisheries management	<u>EU added value</u> – Low . For the EU, not implementing the SFPA signed in 2020 through a new Protocol does not add value in the context of Seychelles
<u>Acceptability</u> – Medium / high . The relevant authorities, the EU shipowners of tuna purse seiners and non-state actors in the EU and in Seychelles support the principle of negotiating a new Protocol. Non-State actors in the EU and in Seychelles require higher transparency and enhanced involvement in the identification and implementation of the sectoral support programme	<u>Acceptability</u> – Low . Not acceptable to EU or stakeholders in Seychelles

7.5. Preferred option

The option 1 leading to the renewal of the Protocol of the Agreement between the EU and Seychelles, with some modifications, should be favoured. The main advantages of option 1 compared to the current Protocol are i) improved proportionality between the number of fishing authorizations available and their foreseeable utilization (relevance of the intervention), and, ii) enhanced protection of crew members through updated social provisions governing employment onboard EU tuna purse seiners (effectiveness and coherence of the intervention).

The non-renewal of the Protocol (option 2) would deprive the EU of an instrument to meet the needs of different stakeholders and its own needs in strengthening global ocean governance. Non-renewal would damage relations between the EU and Seychelles that have lasted for 40 years until now and reduce financial resources available to Seychelles for the support and implementation of the national fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Option 2 would also have negative socioeconomic impacts on the private sectors of both parties through deteriorating profitability of the EU tuna purse seine fleet and reduced economic activities of shore-based Seychellois industries in the upstream and downstream sectors due to decreased attractiveness of Port Victoria.

7.6. Monitoring of a future implementing Protocol

Following its entry into force, the SFPa and Protocol with Seychelles should be subject to continuous monitoring and evaluation through a technical dialogue with the Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy on the Agreement and the Protocol.

With respect to monitoring and evaluation, the most appropriate method of implementation would be for:

- Specification of a log frame for the intervention with associated indicators, and means of verification, which could be used to monitor progress and results achieved over time.
- A jointly agreed multi-annual sectoral support matrix that include relevant SMART³⁵ output, result and impact indicators (as appropriate) and associated targets.
- Monitoring of the financial execution of the EU contribution for sectoral support that includes consistent mechanisms over the duration of the multiannual programme to monitor the non-executed amounts at the time of reporting to the Joint Committee.
- A Joint Committee to meet at least once a year to assess both implementation of the Protocol in light of the log frame, and success in implementing the sectoral support matrix by monitoring progress based on indicators.
- Depending on needs, technical bilateral dialogue, including missions to Seychelles, to prepare the JC or to follow-up implementation of its decisions / recommendations.

The Protocol will need to be subject to an independent "ex-post" evaluation according to the EU Financial Regulation and the CFP. It should be completed no later than one year before the expiry date of the Protocol, to allow the EU institutions to prepare for its possible

³⁵ Specific, measurable, agreed, realistic, timebound

renewal by following the normal legislative procedures in both the EU and Seychelles, without interrupting the possibilities of access.

Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Ocean

PLAN/2024/1981 - EU-Seychelles Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement – negotiation mandate for a new protocol

1. Organisation and timing

<u>Tasks</u>	<u>Time</u>
<u>Signature of the contract</u>	<u>01/10/2024</u>
<u>Kick-off meeting</u>	<u>14/10/2024</u>
<u>Report of the Kick-off meeting</u>	<u>21/10/2024</u>
<u>Submission of the inception report</u>	<u>28/10/2024</u>
<u>Meeting to discuss inception report</u>	<u>15/11/2024</u>
<u>Submission of the draft final report</u>	<u>23/12/2024</u>
<u>Meeting to discuss draft final report</u>	<u>07/01/2025</u>
<u>Submission of the final report</u>	<u>13/11/2025</u>

2. Derogations granted

This initiative does not require an impact assessment as it sets out a general policy approach and does not commit to any action. However, a retrospective and forward-looking evaluation will be carried out. For the retrospective evaluation, the questions look at the effectiveness, efficiency, economy, relevance, coherence, EU added value and acceptance of the Protocol.

For the prospective evaluation, the questions focus on identifying problems and needs, the objectives to be achieved, the options available (conclusion or not of a new Protocol) and the associated risks, and lessons learned.

3. Evidence, sources and quality

The results of this SWD are mainly informed by an evaluation study conducted by an independent consultant. This evaluation study took place from October 2024 to January 2025 under the guidance of an interservice steering group established by different services of the European Commission and within the framework of the terms of reference of specific contract number 12 under the framework contract MARE/2021/OP/0001. The evidence base of this evaluation study consisted of two main components: analysis of available documentation and consultations with stakeholders.

ANNEX II. METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL MODELS USED

The results of this SWD are mainly informed by an evaluation study conducted by an independent consultant. The evaluation work was carried out between May 2024 and January 2025. Conducted under the guidance of an inter-service group (ISG) set up by the European Commission's DG MARE, the method used for the study can be broken down into three main components: analysis of available information, consultations and preparation of an evaluation study.

1. Analysis of available information

DG MARE shared several documents and databases with the consultant team. The main elements shared include:

- Data and information from the meetings of the Joint Committee meetings held since the start of the Protocol
- Reports from the various DG MARE technical missions to Seychelles
- Information exchanged between the two parties in relation to the implementation of sectoral support: programming and monitoring documents, implementation reports prepared by Seychelles, etc.
- Data on fishing authorisations and catches by EU vessels in the fishing zone concerned by the Protocol (extracted from DG MARE's aggregated catch database)
- DG MARE data on the payment of fees due by EU operators for the issue of fishing authorisations;
- Amounts paid from the EU budget under the financial contribution identified under Article 4 of the Protocol (DG MARE budget monitoring).

The evaluation study also made use of other documentary sources, including the regulatory texts applicable in the context of the Agreement, the reports of the IOTC and ICES scientific working groups and annual meetings.

2. Consultations

The consultations carried out for the purposes of this evaluation study, with the assistance of the independent consultants, included :

- **Consultation of stakeholders in the EU:** from the outset of the evaluation, EU stakeholders were identified and consulted on the basis of a strategy validated by DG MARE at the start of the evaluation. The consultation involved the Commission and EEAS services involved in relations with Seychelles, the flag Member States of EU vessels benefiting from fishing opportunities, the professional associations grouping EU operators using the negotiated fishing opportunities and civil society.
- **Consultation of stakeholders in Seychelles:** a mission was organised in Seychelles in consultation with the EU and Seychelles parties in November 2024. During the mission, face-to-face discussion sessions were held with the various departments of the Ministry of Fisheries involved in monitoring the Agreement, the agencies of other Ministries also involved in monitoring the Agreement, and representatives of the private sector in the industrial and artisanal sectors. Representatives of the EUD in Mahe were also consulted.

3. Preparation of the evaluation study

The preparation of this evaluation study takes into account the guidelines and tools recommended by the EU in this area, as well as the methodological elements specific to the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy, such as those concerning the methods for evaluating the socio-economic impact of EU SFPAs.

ANNEX III. EVALUATION MATRIX AND, WHERE RELEVANT, DETAILS ON ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS (BY CRITERION)

The evaluation matrix applied has been the following:

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Success criteria</i>	<i>Suggested indicators</i>
Objective 1: To contribute towards resource conservation and environmental sustainability through rational and sustainable exploitation of living marine resources of Seychelles		
<i>To what extent fisheries activities addressed exclusively at surplus resources and prevent the overfishing of stocks, based on the best scientific advice and improved transparency on the global fishing efforts in the waters included in the current Protocol.</i>	<p>Stocks targeted by the EU fleet are not overexploited at the regional level or at national level, and the EU fishing capacity is within the limits established or recommended by the relevant RFMO or RFO.</p> <p>The Protocol considers the management strategies expressed by RFMOs, RFOs and Seychelles.</p> <p>Seychelles takes part in the relevant RFMO/RFOs and provides data on activities carried out by vessels flagging its flag and by other foreign fleets operating in its waters.</p>	<p>State of the stocks targeted under the Protocol (scientific advice analysis that Seychelles conducted, meetings, regional scientific reports, and data, RFMO/RFO and national scientific institutes); All fleets catches and fishing effort in Seychelles and in the region; possible impact on the environment of all the fleets operating in these waters. All considering that the target are highly migratory species (mainly tuna).</p>
<i>To what extent the implementation has followed the same principle and promote the same standards for fisheries management as applied in EU waters.</i>	<i>The EU and Seychelles adopt management measures to reduce by-catches and discards and reduce the possible impacts on the ecosystem.</i>	<p>State of the stocks taken as by-catch by EU vessels; management measures adopted at the regional, national or EU level or in the framework of the Protocol. Strategies aimed at conservation measures for protected species</p>

Questions	Success criteria	Suggested indicators
<i>To what extent the scientific and technical evaluation of the fisheries concerned have improved.</i>	<i>EU fishing activities are subject to an appropriate reporting obligation framework (logbook, VMS, observers etc.) in the Agreement and a scientific data collection framework (size composition of the catches, biological parameters etc.). This information is transmitted to the relevant RFMO and national research institutes. EU scientists and Seychelles scientists actively participate in scientific meetings and RFMO/RFO scientific committees.</i>	<i>Inclusion of data collection provisions in the Agreement and timely availability of relevant data at the management and scientific operators; amount and quality of data collected; number of reports to RFMOs and scientific institutes; participation rate in RFMO/RFO scientific committees; results achieved with sectoral support; number of meetings between scientists and managers at country level.</i>
<i>To what extent compliance and control of EU-fleet activities have been ensured.</i>	<i>The activity of the EU fleet is properly monitored (VMS, AIS, observers aboard, etc.); reporting, monitoring and control takes place as stipulated in the Protocol and as legislation requires. Moreover, there is adequate monitoring, reporting and control of all catches and catch composition, possible infractions are sanctioned; sectoral support is used to reinforce monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS).</i>	<i>Level of implementation of the monitoring provisions in the Agreement and its Protocol; level of implementation of the monitoring, reporting and control provisions; results achieved with sectoral support in terms of MCS.</i>
Objective 2: To contribute to continuing the fishing activity of the EU long distance fleet and the employment linked to the fleet operating within the Agreement and its Protocol		

Questions	Success criteria	Suggested indicators
<i>To seek appropriate share of the surplus resources, fully commensurate with the EU fleets interests and their regional and sub-regional fishing strategy.</i>	<i>Species and quantities covered by the Protocol correspond to the fishing patterns of the EU fleet. The fishing opportunities allowed are acceptable considering the activities of all fleets active in the same waters at national, sub regional and regional level.</i>	<i>Utilisation of fishing licences; catches in waters covered by the current Agreement and Protocol compared to overall catches at national, regional, and sub-regional level if appropriate; employment (direct and indirect jobs) for EU operators; evolution of the number of EU vessels in the region; contribution to the supply of the EU market and EU processing sector (volume and value) and to the local processing sector.</i>
<i>To ensure that the level of fees payable by Union ship-owners for their fishing activities is fair and proportional considering the revenues and costs, non-discriminatory and promotes a level playing field among the different fleets.</i>	<i>The Agreement and its Protocol offer similar conditions to all foreign fleets operating in the fishing zones and management areas in the current Protocol. The cost benefit ratio is acceptable and reasonable for the EU ship owners and for Seychelles.</i>	<i>Level of fees and technical conditions applied to third countries fleets in the fishing zones and management areas in the current Protocol. Proportion between fees, (all) costs and (all) benefits for the EU ship owners and for Seychelles.</i>
<i>To ensure supply for the EU and for the markets of Seychelles and third countries.</i>	<i>The Agreement offers a reasonable framework to foster landings and thus supplying local markets and trade with third countries. The Agreement fosters trade on fisheries cooperation between the EU and Seychelles and/or third countries.</i>	<i>Percentage of landings versus local and neighbouring countries market's needs. Trade figures on fish (and composition) between the EU and Seychelles.</i>

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Success criteria</i>	<i>Suggested indicators</i>
		<i>Commercial balance and relation with Seychelles and neighbouring countries related to fish caught in Seychelles waters.</i>
<i>To encourage the creation of a secure environment that is favourable to private investment and economic activities contributing to the sustainable development of the country and reinforcing its cooperation with the EU.</i>	<i>Part of the fish caught in the framework of the Agreement supplies local market and processing industry; the EU-fishing supports port- and ancillary activities and the economic and social development in the EU and in the area covered by the current Protocol. The agreement could have an important impact regionally. There are synergies between the implementation of the Agreement and the economic and social development of the country.</i>	<i>Number of initiatives to ensure cooperation between economic operators of the EU and local. Benefits that such activities are brought to the EU, national and locally. Number of initiatives that have had a local, national, and regional benefit.</i>
<i>To consider the specific interests of the Union's outermost regions located in the vicinity Union's fleet.</i>	<i>The Agreement covers the specific needs of the EU fleet based in outermost region and in the EU by ensuring the continuity of their fishing grounds</i>	<i>Number of vessels originating from the outermost region operating under the Agreement and percentage of catches comparted to total catches. The same for the EU vessels originating from other EU regions.</i>
<i>Objective 3: To support the development of a sustainable fisheries sector in partner countries (through the governance framework that the Agreement creates and through the sectoral support; cooperation on blue economy, to the small scale and artisanal fisheries, to job direct and indirect creation, development of the local and national sectoral policies, etc.) and analysis of geographic, social, environmental, and economic impacts.</i>		

Questions	Success criteria	Suggested indicators
<p>To contribute to social, environmental, and economic development in Seychelles.</p> <p>To what extent the SFPA and the activities implemented with the EU contribution for sectoral support, have generated significant positive / unintended / longer term / broader effects?</p>	<p>The sectoral support and the economic activity that the implementation of the Agreement creates contributes to the functioning of the fisheries sector, better governance, transparency, inclusiveness, and social and economic development of the area covered by the current Protocol.</p>	<p>Results achieved with sectoral support and economic and social impact of the implementation of the current Protocol; % of the EU contribution to the different strategies, policies, and value of indicators for assessing the social and economic impact in the EU and in the areas covered by the current Protocol, budget of the national fisheries strategy.</p>
<p>To contribute to strengthen capacities of Seychelles to monitor and control fishing activities and to promote sustainable fishing practices in its waters.</p>	<p>The sectoral support contributes to adequate training, equipment, and infrastructures namely in the areas of science and MCS.</p> <p>Utilisation of the sectoral support has been duly reported (detailed results on expected economic and social benefits in all geographic scope of the current Protocol).</p>	<p>Results achieved with sectoral support; comprehensiveness and level of detail of the sectoral support reporting and cooperation on Blue Economy, small scale and artisanal fisheries, aquaculture, data collection, MCS, food security and policy areas.</p>
<p>To promote employment of local fishers, improving infrastructures and encouraging landings, supporting the third country in developing local fisheries and processing industry EU and for the markets of certain developing</p>	<p>Part of the catches is landed and processed locally.</p> <p>Catches landed traded in the local and neighbouring markets. Successful trade flows generated. Identification of elements that facilitate the trade relation and the ones that discourages it.</p>	<p>Catches (value and volume, including by catches) landed, namely in comparison with landing obligations, processed and marketed locally.</p> <p>Quantities of landings and transshipments from EU/Non-EU fleets in Seychelles Ports,</p>

Questions	Success criteria	Suggested indicators
<p><i>countries. To create employment directly and indirectly.</i></p> <p><i>To promote decent working conditions in the fisheries sector.</i></p>		<p><i>Number of jobs supported in Port and Processing facilities related to EU /Non-EU fleets frequentation and landing/transshipments activities.</i></p> <p><i>Employment created directly and indirectly in the EU and in Seychelles or in the sub region/sub region.</i></p> <p><i>Percentage of supplies to the local and neighbouring markets. Percentage of the fish caught by the EU fleet that supplies these markets and comparison with other sources.</i></p>

a. Efficiency – The extent to which the desired effects are achieved at a reasonable costs

Questions	Success criteria	Suggested indicators
<p><i>To what extent does the Protocol offer value-for-money to the EU?</i></p>	<p><i>The EU financial contribution for access is commensurate to all fishing opportunities offered by the current Protocol and per category.</i></p>	<p><i>Utilisation of the fishing opportunities and positive cost-benefit ratio per category and globally.</i></p>
<p><i>To what extent have the sectoral support and cooperation on blue economy actions, policy area, small scale and artisanal fisheries, food</i></p>	<p><i>All activities included in the sectoral support have been properly used and benefited in environmental, social, and economic terms in the EU and Seychelles.</i></p>	<p><i>Degree of completion of the initial programming; % of sectoral support activities and projects compared to overall EU contribution, to the national budget for fisheries, marine and maritime issues and to</i></p>

<i>security, etc. agreed in the initial programming, been achieved at reasonable cost?</i>		<i>other donor contributions. Contribution to the sustainable development of the country.</i>
<i>To what extent does the Protocol offer value-for-money to the EU ship-owners?</i>	<i>The EU ship-owners' contribution is commensurate to effective catches and profits compared to total costs and benefits.</i>	<i>Volume of catches; evolution of first sale prices, operating and all costs and estimation of the profitability for each segment of the EU fleet, category, vessel, gear type and country (if applicable).</i>
<i>To what extent is the financial compensation for the fishing possibilities under the Agreement advantageous for the EU and for Seychelles?</i>	<i>Seychelles benefits from a fair part of the added value of the catches and all financial compensation. This financial compensation is distributed geographically and socially fairly in Seychelles.</i>	<i>Ratio overall EU contribution /added value generated by the activity of the EU fleet in the fishing zone.</i> <i>Ratio of the benefits of all financial compensation to the concerned population proportional to the fishing activities.</i> <i>Ratio of the economic and social indicators.</i>

b. Economy – the extent to which resources are available in due time, in appropriate quantity and quality at the best price

Questions	Success criteria	Suggested indicators
<i>To what extent is all the EU contribution and specifically its sectoral support commensurate to</i>	<i>The total EU contribution is in line with national and local needs and absorption capacity. The total amount of sectoral support is used according to the foreseen calendar and adapted to the needs of the country. In case of modifications</i>	<i>Consumption of the EU contribution for sectoral support and geographical distribution compared to the local and national needs in the related policy area.</i>

<i>the needs of Seychelles and absorption capacity?</i>	<i>of the initial programming of the sectoral support, these have helped to better use of the financial support and contributed successfully to the sustainable development of the country.</i>	<i>Geographical and social distribution impacts and benefits of all financial compensation. Absorption capacity of the sectoral support compared to the stories; % of sectoral support compared to the national and local budget for fisheries and to other donor contributions.</i>
<i>To what extent has the sectoral support payments been made yearly time and according to the programming defined in article 4 of the Protocol?</i>	<i>Contributions have been paid consistently with the Protocol provisions, and so that they could be allocated to the national or local budget in compliance with the engagements of the Protocol. Achievement of the criteria reports and procedures, budget, financial indicators and methods of control and audit. Achievements of annual and multi-year objectives</i>	<i>Calendar of payments and considered allocations. Results of the budget and financial indicators and methods of control and audit.</i>

d. Relevance – the extent to which the objectives of the Protocol match current needs and problems

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Success criteria</i>	<i>Suggested indicators</i>
<i>To what extent have the objectives set out in the Agreement and the Protocol still correspond to the needs of EU, Member States, its</i>	<i>The implementation of the Agreement and its Protocol are in line with the objectives of resource and environmental sustainability; support to the development of a sustainable fisheries sector at national and local level; facilitation of the integration of coastal states into the global economy;</i>	<i>Comparison between original Agreement's objectives and national and local needs and those of the EU and its fleet improved with the implementation of the Agreement and the Protocol.</i>

ship-owners in the area covered by the current Protocol? Should there have been different objectives?	improvement of scientific and technical knowledge, support to the economic exchanges, strengthening sustainable economic and social development, effective governance, and address correctly the national and local needs and those of the EU and its fleet.	
How is the Agreement relevant to the policy objectives of RFMOs? To what extent is relevant and creates an important impact?	The Protocol contributes to achieving objectives set at RFMOs. It creates synergies with the EU and neighbouring countries at RFMOs.	Comparison between SFPA and these organisations objectives and how the implementation of the Protocol contributes to their objectives; consistency, coherence, and cooperation with objectives of other fisheries Agreements in the region and the EU's interest and objectives in such regional organisations.

e. Coherence – The extent to which the Agreement and its Protocol do not contradict and is coherent other interventions with similar objectives

Questions	Success criteria	Suggested indicators
How coherent is the Protocol with CFP in general and with its external dimension and the regional fisheries policy?	The Protocol is in line with the CFP in general, contribute to achieving EU objectives at regional level, is consistent with RFMOs/RFOS and other Organisations objectives.	Consistency with the CFP and its external dimension and the main strategies policy orientations at regional and sub regional level.

Questions	Success criteria	Suggested indicators
<i>To what extent is the Protocol and its implementation consistent and coherent and complements with the other EU policies, such as the Association Agreement, the EEAS, INTPA, SANTE, TRADE, EMPL and TAXUD policies and legislation?</i>	<i>The Protocol makes a substantial contribution to other EU policies and conversely. The Protocol and its implementation is complementary, ensures coherence for sustainable development including its social dimension and cooperates very positively with other EU interventions.</i>	<i>Consistency with the main EU strategies / policy orientations. Implementation of social clauses. And contribution to sustainable food security. Coherence of the Agreement with EU policies in the region and the country.</i>
<i>In what ways are the Agreement and Protocol consistent with the national fisheries policy and other related policies and are well coordinated with regional fisheries policies and the EU cooperation?</i>	<i>The Protocol contributes to achieving the priorities identified nationally, locally, and regionally. Authorities, stakeholders, and society are aware and informed on the contribution. The Protocol contributes to the sustainable management of fisheries at local, national, and regional level.</i>	<i>Consistency with the national and regional Fisheries, marine and maritime policies, and sectoral policies in the country. Benefits to the governance of the country and to the protection and sustainable management of natural resources and to the society.</i>

f. The EU added value – The extent to which the intervention brings EU added value

Questions	Success criteria	Suggested indicators
<i>What is the additional value resulting from the EU intervention under the Protocol, compared to the absence of Protocol? To what extent would Member States have had the ability or possibility to</i>	<i>Financial contribution, in particular sectoral support, successfully used to support and develop the national and local fisheries sector. Evidence of the need and usefulness of the benefits arising from the Agreement, in terms of good governance, natural resources conservation, sound implementation of sectoral</i>	<i>Data on the implementation within the current Protocol in economic, social, and environmental terms compared to other agreements or with no agreement.</i>

Questions	Success criteria	Suggested indicators
<p><i>put in place appropriate alternative measures?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent the overall benefits of the Agreement and Protocol have an added value for the EU?</i></p>	<p><i>policies, infrastructure, social services, the setting-up of businesses, vocational training, and of programmes aimed at developing and modernising the fisheries sector, to ensure that this distribution benefits the country, its natural resources and the population.</i></p> <p><i>The fishing species included in the agreement are the ones of interest for the EU fleet considering the species available and fishing possibilities for all fleets operating in the same area.</i></p>	
<p><i>What is the additional value resulting from the EU intervention under the Agreement and the Protocol, compared to what could be achieved by the Union fleet outside the framework of the Agreement?</i></p>	<p><i>The Agreement and its implementing Protocol provide substantial benefits to the EU and nationally and locally over private agreements.</i></p>	<p><i>Uptake of licences, comparison of all costs and benefits of operating under this Agreement, other SFPAs and private agreements, degree of legal certainty provided by the Agreement and its legal framework.</i></p>

g. Acceptability – The extent to which stakeholders accept the policy in general and the particular instrument proposed or employed

Questions	Success criteria	Suggested indicators and sources

<i>To what extent are the EU ship-owners satisfied with the Protocol?</i>	<i>The EU ship-owners are satisfied with the technical and financial conditions set up by the Protocol and support its renewal (with possible adaptations).</i>	<i>Result of interviews of ship owners and fisheries associations</i>
<i>To what extent is the Protocol is developed in consultation, coordination and supported by the civil society in the EU and nationally and locally?</i>	<i>Representatives of the civil society are consulted, involved, and satisfied with the environmental and social conditions set up by the SFPA and its Protocol and support their renewal (with possible adaptations).</i>	<i>Result of interviews of NGO representatives and other stakeholders, local population, fishers' representatives and locally/nationally/regionally</i>
<i>To what extent is the Protocol supported by the sector (ship owners, traders, and processors) in the EU and in the partner country, nationally and locally?</i>	<i>The national and local ship-owners do not experience competition by the EU fleet and fish processors benefit from purchase opportunities generated by the Protocol and support its renewal</i>	<i>Result of interviews of industry, fishing operators and content of articles, press, reported incidents between fleets.</i>
<i>To what extent the administration, stakeholders and civil society are in general satisfied with the implementation of the Protocol?</i>	<i>National and national and administration, stakeholders and society in general Society are satisfied with the implementation of the Protocol's obligations and seek its renewal; they praise the benefits of the fisheries partnership.</i>	<i>Level of compliance with the Protocol's obligations in terms of landing obligation, observers, data reporting etc, Impact of the Agreement's implementation to national/local population in social and economic terms, communication activities and their impact, communication activities, press statements, content of articles, etc.</i>

ANNEX IV. OVERVIEW OF BENEFITS AND COSTS

To provide a systematic presentation of the costs and benefits that have been identified and assessed during the evaluation process, a mixed approach has been chosen in this annex by presenting the information in tabular form (as required by the SWD template guidelines) and accompanying it with an explanatory narrative.

The cost/benefit analysis of the current implementing Protocol is based on the access component and for the periods for which complete economic data are available. The cost/benefit ratio of the sectoral support component cannot be estimated at this stage, as this would require the identification and measurement of the impacts of the various projects, which is not possible within the framework of this evaluation.

Overall, as an annual average over the period 2020-2024, 36% of the total added value of the current implementing Protocol is for the benefit of the EU, 29% for Seychelles (including the financial compensation paid by the EU for the access component) and 34% for other entities

The main economic items constituting the value-added benefiting the EU is crew earnings and downstream GVA (processing of around 20% of tuna catches in Spain). For Seychelles, total GVA is comprised primarily of access payments from the EU (financial contribution for access) (42%), upstream GVA (12%) resulting from EU tuna vessels calls in Port Victoria, and downstream GVA (11%) resulting from processing by IOT of EU tuna catches landed in Port Victoria by IOT (as opposed to catches transhipped for processing elsewhere).

Indicators relating to the benefit/cost ration of the access component of the current implementing Protocol

Indicator	Access component of the EU financial compensation	Total EU financial compensation (access and sectoral support)
EU financial compensation EU (EUR '000s)	2 811	2 811
Sectoral support (EUR '000s)		2 800
Shipowners' access payments (EUR '000s)	4 464	4 464
Total EU payments (EUR '000s)	7 275	10 075
Total EU payments % of turnover	10%	13%
EU payments % of turnover	4%	7%
EU shipowners' payments % of turnover	6%	6%
Average cost of catch (EUR / tonne)	147	204
Average cost borne by the EU (EUR / tonne)	57	114
Average cost borne by EU shipowners (EUR / tonne)	90	90
Percentage of cost borne by EU shipowners	61%	44%

With an annual average of EUR 56.4 million value added generated directly and indirectly by the activities of the EU tuna vessels of in the Seychelles fishing zone between 2020 and 2023, the EU investment in the access component of the financial compensation (EUR 2.8 million a year on average) yielded a positive cost benefit ratio with every EUR 1 invested from the EU budget in the compensation payment for access supporting the creation of EUR 20.07 of value added, of which EUR 7.67 accrued to the EU, EUR 5.18 to Seychelles, and EUR 7.22 to other entities

Value-added indicators generated by EU vessels benefiting from fishing opportunities, for the period 2019 - 2023

Beneficiary entity	Ratio GVA / access compensation	
EU	Direct GVA	5.92
	Indirect GVA	1.75
	Total GVA	7.67
Seychelles	Direct GVA	2.09
	Indirect GVA	3.08
	Total GVA	5.18
Other entities	Direct GVA	2.10
	Indirect GVA	5.12
	Total GVA	7.22

Background

In line with the Terms of Reference and the Better Regulation ‘toolbox’, a consultation strategy was elaborated by the independent consultant to obtain evidence from relevant stakeholders. The strategy defined the best means of consulting relevant stakeholders both in the EU and in the partner country concerned.

Objectives

The aim of the consultation:

1. To obtain stakeholders’ views on the implementation of the ongoing protocol, as well as on the possible renewal of the protocol, including the different options;
2. To use the results of this consultation in the evaluation report.

Target groups

- Organisations representing EU fishing vessels with fishing opportunities under the current Protocol and, where appropriate, of EU fishing vessels with a possible interest in obtaining them in the future;
- Competent authorities of EU Member States (MS) whose fishing vessels use fishing opportunities under the current Protocol and having a possible interest in obtaining them in the future
- Civil society: NGOs active in the field of fisheries and the marine environment and trade unions of seamen signed on board EU fishing vessels or their representative organisations
- Consultations with development cooperation organisations of EU Member States active in Seychelles

List of targeted organisations consulted at the end of this Annex

Method of consultation

- By electronic consultation on the basis of questionnaires tailored to each of the target groups in four languages (ES, FR, EN). Supplemented, where appropriate, by telephone interviews.

Results of the consultation

Response rate: 75 %

Total number of organisation consulted (outside European Commission DGs, LDAC and MAC): 20

Number of replies received: 15

Stakeholder	Contribution
A- Stakeholders in charge of the implementation of the SFPA	
DG MARE B3 (HQ and Attaché)	Provided (verbal, written)
Member States benefitting from fishing opportunities	
Spain	Provided by questionnaire (Q)
France	Provided (Q)
Italy	Provided (Q)
Portugal	Provided (Q)
B- Stakeholders who are direct beneficiaries of fishing opportunities	
OPAGAC (purse seiners - Spain)	Provided (Q)
ANABAC (purse seiners - Spain)	Provided (Q)

ORTHONGEL (Purse seiners - France)	Provided (Q)
CRPMEM – Regional Fisheries Committee of La Réunion (Longliners –France)	Provided (Q)
OPNAPA - <i>Organización de Productores Nacional de Palangre de Altura</i> (Longliners – Spain)	Not provided
ADAPI (longliners – Portugal)	Not provided
ORPAGU (longliners – Spain)	Provided (Q)
C- Stakeholders with an interest in the SFPA	
European Institutions	
Other DGs / MARE Units	Provided (through the Steering Committee)
Civil Society Organisations	
Europêche	Not provided
European Transport Federation	Provided (Q)
CAPE	Provided (Q)
WWF (joint answer with Oceana)	Provided (Q)
Environmental Justice Foundation	Not provided
Oceana (joint answer with WWF)	Provided (Q)
Long Distance Advisory Committee (LDAC)	Informed*

Information regarding the exact content of the consultation, including detailed responses of the stakeholders, can be found in Annex 7 of the evaluation study.