



Brussels, 3.3.2026
SWD(2026) 68 final

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT
EVALUATION

**on the Implementing Protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the
European Union and the Republic of Mauritius**

accompanying the document

Recommendation for a Council Decision

**authorising the opening of negotiations on behalf of the European Union for the
conclusion of a Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement and its Implementing
Protocol between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius**

{COM(2026) 95 final}

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Glossary

<i>Term or acronym</i>	<i>Definition</i>
ACP	Africa, Caribbean and Pacific
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
EDF	European Development Fund
EEZ	Exclusive economic zone
ERS	Electronic reporting system
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FMC	Fisheries monitoring centre
FTE	Full-time equivalent
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
IUU fishing	Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.
MCS	Monitoring, control and surveillance
RFMOs	Regional fisheries management organisations
SFPA	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement
VMS	Vessel monitoring system
WB	World Bank

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of the evaluation

Under the external dimension of the EU's Common Fishery Policy (CFP)¹, the Commission negotiates and implements Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) with non-EU countries.

The SFPAs create a legal, environmental economic and social governance framework for fishing activities carried out by Union fishing vessels in non-EU-country waters. In exchange, the EU provides that non-EU country with financial compensation for access to its waters and financial assistance to implement a national strategy for sustainable fisheries, ocean governance, and the blue economy. The EU contribution is complemented by fees payable by EU vessel owners.

Under 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 negotiating and implementing the SFPAs.

Under Article 31(10) of the CFP Basic Regulation¹, the European Commission must also arrange for *ex post* and *ex ante* evaluations of each Implementing Protocol to an SFPA before recommending that the Council authorise the opening of negotiations for a successor protocol. These evaluations aim to inform decision makers before they adopt a Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations on behalf of the EU.

This obligation is complemented by Article 34 of the Financial Regulation², which requires evaluations for all programmes and activities which entail significant spending to 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 non-EU 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 of the Fisheries Partnership concluded between the EU and the Republic of Mauritius Agreement (the

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](#)).

Agreement). These evaluations are primarily informed by an evaluation study conducted by an independent consultant.

The *ex post* evaluation covers most of the period of application of the current Implementing Protocol of the Agreement (from December 2022 to November 2025). It provides an overall assessment of the Implementing Protocol, drawing conclusions in terms of its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, acceptance, and the EU added value of the intervention. The detailed evaluation questions corresponding to these evaluation criteria can be found in Annex III and are 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 the possible impacts of the following three scenarios:

- No negotiation with a view to concluding a new Implementing Protocol;
- No change to the current Agreement and Protocol (status quo);
- Negotiation of a new Agreement with a revised Implementing Protocol.

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 August 2025 to November 2025 under the guidance of an interservice group established by different services of the European Commission and under the terms of reference of specific contract number 14 under the framework contract MARE/2021/OP/0001. It consisted of: (i) analysis of available information; (ii) consultations; and (iii) preparation of an evaluation report.

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

On the consultation, the independent consultant consulted stakeholders in the EU and Mauritius (EU stakeholders between October and November 2025; Mauritius stakeholders during the consultant's visit to Mauritius in October 2025). A 'call for evidence' document for feedback for the period September-November 2025³ was also published on the Commission's Have Your Say Portal. For more detailed information about the stakeholder consultations, see Annex V 'Synopsis Report'.

The independent consultant sent the evaluation to the European Commission in December 2025 and the overall level and quality of findings gathered is robust. Nevertheless, this SWD and the evaluation on which it is based consider all

³ [EU-Mauritius fisheries agreement – negotiation mandate for a new protocol](#)

information available as of November 2025. They do not consider information beyond this date, because the evaluation must be finalised at least a year before the expiry of the Implementing Protocol to obtain a mandate for negotiation and subsequently negotiate a successor protocol.

See Annex II for detailed information on the methodology, including information on how the supporting evaluation study was conducted.

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 non-EU countries date back to the late 1980s and are enshrined in the CFP. In line with UN Sustainable Development Goal 14 (*life below water*), the SFPAs should contribute to 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 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 non-EU-country waters. Under the framework of the SFPAs, Union vessels may only catch surplus of the allowable catch, as provided in Article 62(2) and (3) of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea⁴. 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 EU and to the non-EU country concerned, including its local population and fishing industry.

In terms of financial compensation, the EU provides the SFPA partner country with financial compensation for access to its waters and financial assistance to implement a national strategy for fisheries and the blue economy. The EU contribution is complemented by fees payable by EU vessel owners.

Importantly, SFPAs are exclusive and made 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.

⁴ https://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_overview_convention.htm

The implementation of an SFPA and its Implementing Protocol is monitored by a Joint Committee composed of representatives from both the EU and the SFPA partner country.

In July 2011, the Commission adopted a Communication on the external dimension of the CFP⁵ and proposed several actions to reform SFPAs. The Council adopted Conclusions regarding the External Dimension of the CFP on 19 March 2012⁶ and the European Parliament expressed its views in a report adopted in November 2012⁷.

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 fisheries management at international and regional levels and under bilateral agreements in order to ensure a level playing field.

SFPAs have the following objectives⁵:

- 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 to exclusively target surplus resources and preventing the overfishing of stocks, on the basis of the best scientific advice and more transparency on the global fishing efforts in non-EU countries' waters;
 - b. following the same principles and promoting the same standards for fisheries management 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 EU fleets and the employment linked to the fleets operating within SFPAs by:**
 - a. seeking an appropriate share of the surplus resources, fully commensurate with the EU fleets' interests;
 - b. ensuring that the level of fees payable by Union shipowners for their fishing activities is fair, non-discriminatory and commensurate with the benefits provided through the access conditions while avoiding any discriminatory treatment towards Union 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
 - e. taking into account the specific interests of the EU's outermost regions located in the vicinity.
- 3) To support the development of a sustainable fisheries sector in EU partner countries by:**
 - a. contributing to capacity building in the EU partner countries (notably by improving fisheries' legal framework, control and surveillance and science);

⁵ 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, 13.7.2011.

⁶ Council conclusions on the external dimension of the CFP, 19.3.2012, 7086/12 (http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/agricult/129052.pdf)

⁷ European Parliament's report on the External Dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy, 22.11.2012.

- b. setting annual and multiannual objectives to be achieved with the aim of developing sustainable fishing activities;
- c. assessing the results obtained in terms of impacts and budgetary and financial requirements; and
- d. promoting the employment of local fishers, improving infrastructures and encouraging landings, supporting the non-EU country in developing local fisheries and processing industry.

2.1.2 Fisheries Partnership Agreement (FPA) between the EU and the Republic of Mauritius

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

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

The EU and Mauritius concluded a Fisheries Partnership Agreement on 21 December 2013, for six years and automatically renews for three-year period. The current Implementing Protocol covers the period from 21 December 2022 to 20 December 2026.

The agreement with Mauritius is a bilateral agreement for highly migratory species. Species covered under the current Protocol are highly migratory species listed in Annex I to the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea. The current Protocol provides fishing opportunities for a maximum of 40 EU tuna purse seiners and 45 EU surface longliners. The Protocol allows EU vessels from France, Italy, Portugal and Spain to fish in Mauritius' exclusive economic zone.

The current Protocol includes an annual EU financial contribution for access – EUR 275 000 – plus a separate contribution for sectoral support – EUR 450 000. 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-Mauritius FPA for the period 2022-2026.

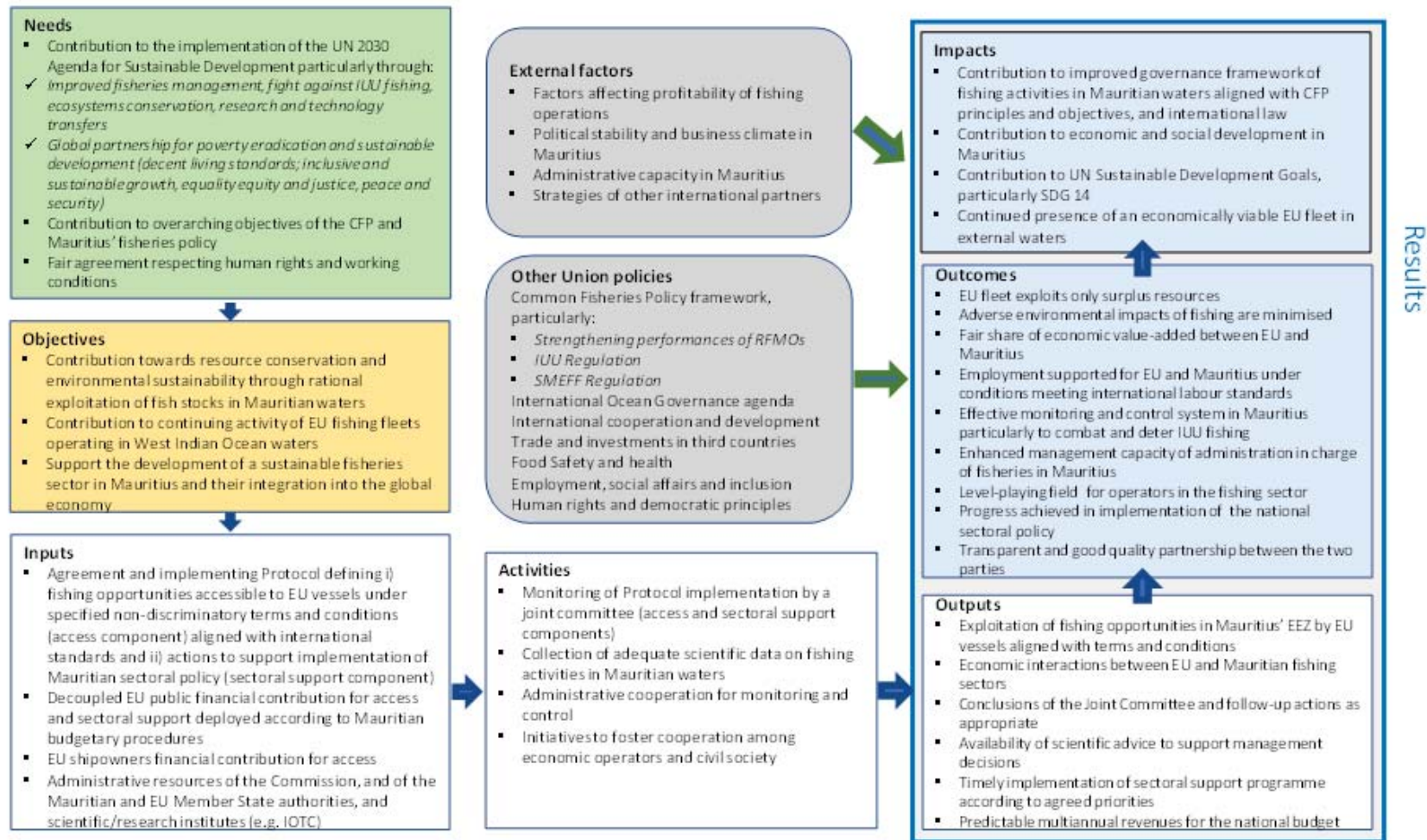
Main elements of the current implementing Protocol of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and Mauritius

Duration of the FPA	Six years initially, then tacitly renewed for additional periods of three years.
Date of entry into force of FPA	28 January 2014
Date of provisional application of Protocol	21 December 2022 (entry into force: 7 September 2023) *
Duration of the Protocol	Four years – ending on 20 December 2026
Maximum number of EU vessels authorised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 tuna purse seiners. • 45 surface longliners. • Supply vessels with number in line with IOTC rules.
Species authorised	Tunas and associated species: highly migratory species listed in Annex I to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, with the exception of some shark species and other species which are protected or prohibited under the laws of Mauritius, the framework of the IOTC or other international agreements.
Annual counterpart finance by the EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUR 275 000 per year for access to the Mauritius fishing zone Financial compensation for access corresponds to a reference tonnage of 5 500 tonnes. Catch exceeding the reference tonnage is subject to a payment of EUR 50 for each additional tonne. • EUR 450 000 per year for the support and implementation of the Mauritius’ 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 9 360 representing 117 tonnes catch at EUR 80 per tonne. • EUR 20 per fishing day contribution to observer scheme. <p>For each surface longliner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • > 100 GT: Annual non-recoverable advance payment of EUR 4 560 representing 57 tonnes of catch at EUR 80 per tonne. • < 100 GT: Annual non-recoverable advance payment of EUR 2 400 representing 30 tonnes of catch at EUR 80 per tonne. <p>For each supply vessel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual authorisation fee of EUR 5 000.

The sectoral support component is used for activities planned for (1) Sustainable development of Mauritius’ fisheries policy or (2) Development of the maritime policy and ocean economy.

The following graphic illustrates the intervention logic. It seeks to connect the needs, objectives, activities and expected achievements. The expected achievements are broken down into the impacts, outcomes and outputs of the Implementing Protocol.

Intervention logic of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Mauritius, and its current Implementing Protocol



2.2. Point(s) of comparison

The EU and Mauritius have a long history in the area of fisheries. The first fisheries agreement concluded between the EU and Mauritius dates back from 1989. On 21 December 2013, the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius signed a new FPA, initially for six years, then tacitly renewed for additional periods of three years.

Before the current Protocol, the former Protocol started on 8 December 2017 and ended on 7 December 2021. A prolongation of the Protocol was agreed and signed through an exchange of letters and started on 1 January 2022, for a period of six months⁸.

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

Under the 2017-2021 Protocol (for which the evaluation covered the period 2017-20)⁹:

- EU fleet access to the waters of Mauritius was granted to up to 40 purse seiners, 45 surface longliners and up to 20 support vessels.
- the annual mean catch of tropical tuna was 2 843 t (71% of reference tonnage), and the generated income for Mauritius:
 - o EUR 1 million per year (mean catch value per year).
 - o EUR 630 000 per year of implementation (total of contributions from the EU and shipowners)

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

- The status of the three main targeted stocks is as follows.
 - o Yellow fin tuna: not overfished, no overfishing occurring
 - o Big eye tuna: overfished, overfishing occurring
 - o Skipjack: not overfished, no overfishing occurring(Indicators relate to biomass for overfished status and to fishing mortality for overfishing status). See Annex 4 of the evaluation report for the species concerned.
- The average annual turnover of the EU fishing fleet from catch obtained in Mauritian waters amounted to EUR 5.6 million between 2018 and 2019. EU fishing activities supported the creation of EUR 2.5 million gross value added and EUR 754 000 gross profit. Mauritius received 26% of the total value added, mainly through payments for access and activities in the fish processing sector.
- Level and repartition of the generated added value: Considering cost-benefit ratios in relation to gross value added, the main finding is that every EUR 1

⁸ ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2022/614/oj

⁹ Reference pages in this section are to the evaluation final report of April 2021 of SC No 17 under MARE 2015/23 framework contract <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/be51d65b-bf5d-11eb-a925-01aa75ed71a1>

invested by the EU in the compensation payment for access supports the creation of EUR 20.53 in value added, all entities included. For the EU, the gross value added multiplier is positive, with every EUR 1 invested by the EU in the compensation payment for access supporting the creation of EUR 10.57 in value added.

- The Protocol is estimated to support a total of 110 full-time equivalents (through both direct and indirect employment). In total, our estimates indicate that almost 100 full-time equivalents are supported by the Protocol in upstream and downstream ancillary industries in the EU and Mauritius, with a large majority of them (88%) in the downstream sector (marketing and processing of catch).
- The Protocol made provisions for (i) an annual budget of EUR 220 000 to support the implementation of Mauritius' sectoral fisheries policy and (ii) an additional (annual) amount of EUR 135 000 to support the development of maritime policy and ocean economy (i.e. EUR 1.42 million in total over the duration of the Protocol).

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

3.1. Current state of play

The current status of the implementation of the Protocol is as follows:

3.2. Utilisation of fishing opportunities

On an annual average, almost 47% of the maximum number of 40 fishing licences for all EU tuna purse seiners were granted in the period 2023-2025; and 39% of the maximum number of 45 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 FPA fishing zone (as of September 2025)

	<i>2023</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2025*</i>	<i>Average</i>
Tuna purse seiners (Maximum 40)	60%	40%	40%	47%
Surface longliners (Maximum 45)	40%	38%	38%	39%
Both categories (Maximum 95)	44%	35%	35%	38%

¹⁰ See report, page 15

3.3. Catches

Total catches of all species obtained by EU tuna vessels in the Mauritius fishing zone amounted to an annual average of 662 tonnes between 2023 and 2024.

For both 2023 and 2024, EU catches were below the reference tonnage of 5 500 tonnes identified by the Protocol to establish the EU financial contribution for access (12% on average over 2023-2024, and 21% and 4% in 2023 and 2024 respectively). Close to 90% of EU catches in the Mauritius fishing zone were obtained by EU tuna purse seiners, with comparatively lower contributions by the EU surface longline fleet.

Annual catch of EU tuna vessels in the Mauritius fishing zone by fishing category and flag Member State (2023 – 2024, tonnes)

	2023	2024*	Average
Tuna purse seiners, of which:	1 032	167	599
<i>Spain</i>	629	83	356
<i>France</i>	403	84	244
<i>Italy</i>	0	0	0
Surface longliners, of which:	98	27	63
<i>Spain</i>	0	0	0
<i>France</i>	98	27	63
<i>Portugal</i>	0	0	0
TOTAL	1 130	194	662

3.4. Scientific cooperation

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

Scientific cooperation between the EU and Mauritius 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 Mauritius fisheries and the participation of Mauritius 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. 18 Table 7):

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

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

- 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. A full assessment of the stock is ongoing in 2025. Its preliminary findings are available in the online report(s) on the 28th session of the IOTC scientific committee meeting from 1-5 December 2025. EU purse seiners caught about 9% of the 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 caught 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 the 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 Mauritius), with the EU accounting for between 10% and 20% of total catches depending on the species.

Conservation and management measures are adopted within the multilateral framework of the IOTC. They include technical measures such as capacity limits, catch limits, time closure, landing obligation and limits on the number of fish aggregating devices, and monitoring measures such as vessel monitoring systems (VMS), catch declarations, observer coverage and port inspections. IOTC conservation and management measures apply to all tuna fishing activities, including those taking place in the Mauritius fishing zone.

3.5. Technical measures

3.5.1. Monitoring, control and surveillance

Chapter V of the Annex to the Protocol lays down the monitoring, control and inspection regime that applies to all EU tuna vessels operating in Mauritius' fishing zone.

Catch declarations

During the first years the protocol applied, catch declarations were missing from some of the reporting of catches of the EU tuna purse seiners. Both parties confirmed that this improved from October 2024 and did not trigger a need for further corrective adjustments. To improve catch declarations further, at the last joint committee meeting in January 2025 the parties agreed to exchange catch data on a three-month basis and establish a small technical working group.

Electronic Reporting System (ERS)

The ERS became operational in September 2024 for Mauritian industrial vessels and from October 2024 for EU vessels. It will be obligatory for Mauritian semi-industrial vessels from December 2025.

EU tuna vessels that are authorised to access the Mauritius fishing zone report to their flag Member State that they have been using ERS in line with the EU Control Regulation¹² since 2012. Mauritius' tuna vessels have successfully trialled implementing the ERS on the national purse seine fleet (13 vessels), with financial support from the sectoral support programme.

Since October 2024, catch reporting by EU vessels has improved with the introduction of the ERS catch reporting system. All parties to the FPA support(ed) the transition to an ERS because of the simplification provided by the system. Implementation of the ERS is also simplifying the monitoring of the EU fleet and providing relevant and timely information. The Mauritius' authorities cross check catch data against a summary from the VMS unit for EU vessels in Mauritian waters.

Surveillance and control

Sectoral support also includes increased monitoring, control and surveillance. Sectoral support funds have enabled upgrades to the FMC and VMS. Those upgrades allow multiple agencies to simultaneously view automatic identification system (AIS) and VMS data on the same platform or map, which improves monitoring. EU vessels generally complying with entry and exit requirements, and the Mauritian authorities have been able to detect instances of non-compliance (one in 2023 and one in 2024).

3.5.2. Employment of national fishers on board of EU vessels

The EU purse seine fleet did not meet the employment target set in the Protocol (of at least 14 qualified Mauritian fishers on each EU purse seiner when operating in the Mauritius fishing zone). Minutes of the Joint Committee report that no seafarers were embarked onboard EU vessels during the application of the previous protocol. No list was provided for 2024, so the EU vessels owners will not pay any compensation for that year. Mauritius will provide the EU with an updated list for 2025.

3.5.3. Observers

The Protocol's clauses on embarking observers designated by Mauritius on EU vessels were not implemented. In the minutes of the last joint committee meeting, Mauritius detailed actions taken to replace the previous pool of observers, namely the provision

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

for trainings, the organisation of workshops, and the upcoming reciprocal fishing agreement with Seychelles.

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

3.6. Sectoral support component

The current Implementing Protocol has earmarked a budget of EUR 450 000 over a period of four years to contribute to the implementation of the national strategy for fisheries and maritime policy and the blue economy and support the sustainable management of fishery resources and the development of the fisheries sector in Mauritius.

3.6.1. Monitoring of sectoral support

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

Article 7 of the Protocol to the FPA gives the possibility to the Joint Committee to adopt recommendations to facilitate the implementation of and reporting on the sectoral support programme contributing towards Mauritius's fisheries policy.

The Mauritian authorities are also required to produce an annual report on the actions implemented and the results achieved with sectoral support. The report must be examined by the Joint Committee (Article 7, point 5 of the Protocol), and for the two parties to ensure the visibility of actions implemented through the sectoral support.

To date, the Joint Committee has held one meeting in Brussels in March 2023 and one meeting in Mauritius in January 2025.

The EU monitors the implementation of the sectoral support on the basis of supporting documents supplied by the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries and through technical missions.

3.6.2. Payment of sectoral support

The current Implementing Protocol has earmarked an EU financial contribution of EUR 450 000 per year for sectoral support, i.e. EUR 1.8 million for the total duration of the protocol (2022-2026). 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 keeping with the rules set out in the Protocol and in 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 1/4	13/07/2025	Approval of the multiannual programme and of the first annual work programme during the joint committee meeting
Tranche 2/4	24/02/2025	Validation in the January 2025 joint committee meeting of the 75% financial execution rate of the budget for the first annual programme
Tranche 3/4 (expected Q2 2026)		Depends on the developments by the end of 2025
Tranche 4/4 (expected Q4 2026)		Depends on the developments during 2026

As of December 2025, Mauritius had been paid by two out of four annual tranches, representing a total payment of EUR 900 000 (50% of the maximum EU contribution for the planned sectoral support).

3.7. Financial aspects

- Average income generated for Mauritius for access: EUR 1.1 million (EU yearly public contribution plus shipowners' contribution).
- Every euro of public investment is estimated to generate EUR 4.01 in added value: EUR 1.43 for the EU; EUR 1.48 for Mauritius; and EUR 1.09 for other entities.
- Direct and indirect employment: the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs directly linked to the protocol is close to 21, including an estimated 5 FTEs for Mauritius national employee as crew. Estimate indicates almost 16 FTEs indirectly linked to the protocol in ancillary industries.
- Sectoral support contribution transferred to Mauritius: EUR 900 000 up to December 2025.

3.8. Reporting obligations

Reporting obligations stem from EU legislation that obliges Member States' authorities, private organisations and/or public organisations to periodically send structured or unstructured data (qualitative or quantitative) to competent authorities at EU or national level¹³.

¹³ [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.

With one exception, the current FPA/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 Mauritius to submit an annual report on the implementation of the sectoral support and a final report before the expiry of the Protocol (Article 7, point 5).

Reporting obligation	Additional to previous Protocol, other EU, Mauritius, or IOTC legislation and requirements?
EU shipowners Submission of an application for fishing authorisation (Annex, Chapter II)	No (requirements included in the previous Protocol, and required by the Mauritius Marine Resources Act, 2007 and the Fisheries Act, 2023)
EU shipowners Notification of entering or exiting the Mauritius fishing zone, including through the ERS when established (Annex, Chapter V, Article 1)	No (requirement included in the previous Protocol and required by the Mauritius Marine Resources Act, 2007 and the Fisheries Act, 2023)
EU shipowners Advance notice of intended landings and transshipments in the Mauritius designated port (Annex, Chapter IV)	No (requirements included in the previous Protocol, and required by Control Regulation (EU) 1224/2009 as amended by Regulation (EU) 2023/2842, IOTC Resolution 25/05, and the Mauritius Marine Resources Act, 2007 and the Fisheries Act, 2023)
EU shipowners Reporting of catches, and using electronic logbooks once the ERS is operational (Annex, Chapter III)	No (requirements included in the previous Protocol, and required by Control Regulation (EU) 1224/2009 as amended by Regulation (EU) 2023/2842, IOTC Resolution 15/01 and the Mauritius Marine Resources Act, 2007 and the Fisheries Act, 2023)
Observers Observer report submitted to master of vessel and Mauritius authorities	No (required by IOTC Resolution 25/06 and Mauritius Fisheries Act, 2023)
Mauritius authorities Infringements included in an inspection report to be sent by the Mauritius authorities, to vessel owners, and the EU (Annex, Chapter IV, paragraph 12)	No (required by Control Regulation (EU) 1224/2009 as amended by Regulation (EU) 2023/2842)

EU shipowners and EU Member State authorities Reporting of vessel positions through satellite-based vessel tracking device or VMS (Annex, Chapter VI)	No (requirement applicable as a result of Control Regulation (EU) 1224/2009 as amended by Regulation (EU) 2023/2842, IOTC Resolution 25/02 and the Mauritius Marine Resources Act, 2007 and the Fisheries Act, 2023)
EU DG MARE and Mauritius authorities Drawing up an annual statement of fees (Annex, Chapter III)	No (requirements included in the previous Protocol)
EU DG MARE and Mauritius authorities Mutual exchange of catch data every quarter (Annex, Chapter III, paragraphs 18 and 19)	No (requirement included in the previous Protocol)
Mauritius authorities Annual reporting on the implementation of the sectoral support, and preparation of a final report before the end of the Protocol (Article 7, point 5 of the Protocol)	No (requirement included in the previous Protocol)

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 Mauritius' 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 resources of 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 the IOTC.

The most recent scientific review of the stocks targeted by the EU tuna fleet in the Mauritius 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 catches about 9% of total catch in the Indian Ocean.

The management of stocks targeted by the EU tuna fleet in the Mauritius' fishing zone is under the mandate of the IOTC to which both the EU and Mauritius are contracting parties. Specific conservation and management measures adopted by IOTC apply to all

RFMO contracting parties fishing entities, including the EU and Mauritius, 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 Mauritius fishing zone.

Mauritius takes part in the work of the IOTC, as evidenced by the presence of Mauritian delegates at plenary and technical meetings. Based on the reports of the IOTC compliance committee, Mauritius reached a high compliance rate (see Table 37 on page 75), above the average performance of other IOTC contracting parties and cooperating non-contracting parties. Mauritius provides data in the Ministry's Annual Report on Performance.

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 Mauritius fishing zone and in the broader Indian Ocean follow IOTC conservation and management measures.

The French surface longline fleet utilising fishing opportunities do not target shark species. EU surface longliners' catches are dominated by swordfish and tuna species, with smaller catches of other species such as blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*).

The Mauritius Fisheries Act 2023 has as a general principle that an ecosystem approach must be applied to the management and development of fisheries and aquaculture¹⁴. Part IV.12.2a of the Act requires that conservation and management measures include management of bycatch, while Part IV.22 specifically deals with management of bycatch.

Furthermore, EU purse seine operators using fishing opportunities available under the Protocol implemented unilateral measures to minimise ecosystem impacts of their activities through Fisheries Improvement Plans. Those unilateral measures apply to all activities of purse seiners (including those in the Mauritius fishing zone) and their implementation status is publicly available on the internet¹⁵.

Improvement of technical and scientific assessment of the fisheries

EU fishing activities in the Mauritius 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

¹⁴ (Article 5.f); and activities and measures taken under the Act should aim at protecting and enhancing biodiversity to eliminate or minimise: (i) waste, bycatch, discards, regulatory discards, economic discards and catch by lost or abandoned gear; (ii) catch of non-target species; (iii) catch of critically endangered species; and (iv) pollution (Article 5.g).

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

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 declarations missing or not fulfilling IOTC standards, the quality of the declaration has satisfied IOTC standards since 2024 and the introduction of the ERS.

EU fishing activities are reported as evidenced by the EU annual reports to the 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 the 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 Mauritius' 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 Mauritius fishing zone. Provisions included monitoring of vessel position through satellites (using VMS), timely submission of logbooks and observer reports to Mauritius, quarterly monitoring of total catch, and entry-exit notifications. 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. This was achieved during the Protocol, with the ERS becoming operational in October 2024; since then, catch reporting by EU vessels has improved with the introduction of the ERS catch reporting system. All parties to the FPA support(ed) the transition to an ERS because of the simplification provided by the system. The Mauritius' authorities cross check catch data with a summary from the VMS unit for EU vessels in Mauritian waters.

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 Mauritius subsequently successfully addressed by the EU party over time.

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

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

The sectoral support programme has committed about 36% of its planned expenditure to improved monitoring and surveillance activities. Upgrades to the FMC and VMS have been enabled with sectoral support funds and allows viewing of AIS and VMS data simultaneously on the same platform/map by multiple agencies for better monitoring. EU vessels are generally complying with entry and exit requirements, and where not the case this was detected by the Mauritius authorities.

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

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

The Protocol provides access to a fishing zone of complementary importance for the EU tuna purse-seine fleet operating in the Indian Ocean. While Mauritian waters are not among the main fishing areas for the fleet, access to this zone allows target species to be caught there and, importantly, supports operations alongside adjacent fishing zones (such as Seychelles and Madagascar) and nearby high seas areas. For EU surface longliners, the available data also point to relatively limited use of the fishing opportunities on offer, suggesting that access plays a supporting rather than primary role in their overall fishing strategy in the region.

Moreover, the reference tonnage remains poorly aligned with the actual catch levels recorded in Mauritian waters, and the maximum number of fishing authorisations provided by the Protocol appears higher than necessary in light of recent utilisation rates. Nevertheless, the Protocol is effective in contributing to the wider regional network of fishing opportunities and routing options for the EU fleet operating in the Indian Ocean.

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

Mauritius authorises access to its fishing zone under different arrangements including a bilateral government-to-government fishing agreement with Seychelles, and through fishing agreements or direct authorisations concluded with foreign fishing associations and vessels from China, Taiwan and South Korea. Over 2023 and 2024 however only China utilised the longline opportunities to make catches of 137 tonnes in 2024. All other catches in Mauritian waters (apart from those made by EU vessels) were made by Mauritian purse or longline vessels.

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 line with the IOTC conservation and management measures. The Protocol does not include technical rules that give selective dispensation from rules applicable to all other industrial tuna vessels while fishing in the Mauritius fishing zone.

While the financial access conditions provided 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 Louis in Mauritius is a port where mainly EU vessels conduct vessel repairs and maintenance at the CNOI shipyard. When they do so, they make direct landings of catch for processing by the Princes Tuna company, generating activity in offloading and cold storage as well as in the cannery. EU longline vessels utilising the agreement do not land catches in Mauritius, but their catches are sold in Réunion and the EU market.

EU purse seine tuna catches in the Indian are used as raw material for the preparation of canned tuna after processing in non-EU countries (e.g. Mauritius, Seychelles, 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)¹⁸. According to the COMEXT trade database, Mauritius represented 8% of total EU imports of prepared tuna products on average between 2020 and 2023 (Seychelles 9% and Madagascar 2%). Of the c.a. 200 000 tonnes a year of purse seine catch in the Indian Ocean made by EU vessels, Princes Tuna Mauritius purchases around 90 000 tonnes from EU vessels.

According to the economic analysis, Mauritius derives about EUR 150 000 per year of indirect value added in the upstream and downstream ancillary local industries, supporting about 16 FTE jobs for Mauritian residents.

The enabling environment supported by the FPA and its predecessors contributed to the establishment of economic links between the EU and the Mauritius seafood sector. As examples, a company registered in Italy recently bought a significant share in Princes Tuna from the Mitsubishi Corporation, and a fishing company registered in Spain has a subsidiary that operates the three Mauritius-flagged purse seiners.

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

The Protocol included fishing opportunities for the small-scale French surface longline fleet based in Réunion. The Mauritius fishing zone is close enough from their home ports to interest them in its fishing opportunities. An annual average of 15 <100 GT surface longliners and two >100 GT surface longliners applied for an authorisation, but catch volumes have been low (the annual average over 2023 and 2024 was 63 tonnes).

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

3.1 Contribute to social, environmental, and economic development in Mauritius. To what extent have the FPA and the activities implemented with the EU

¹⁸ EUMOFA (2024) – The EU fish market 2024 edition [Link](#)

contribution for sectoral support generated significant positive / unintended / longer-term / broader effects?

The sectoral support funding represents a small part of the overall expenditure by the Mauritian government to support the functioning of fisheries and blue economy sectors and better governance (EUR 450 000 per year, compared to around EUR 16 million of the Ministry's budget for fisheries and the blue economy in 2024/25). It is nevertheless important, given the large proportion of Ministry's budget taken up by salaries rather than by projects.

The multiannual matrix over four years envisaged sectoral support of EUR 2 million, structured around two main priorities:

- Priority area 1: sustainable fisheries (EUR 1.31 million)
- Priority area 2: the blue economy (EUR 0.7 million).

Within these priorities, projects/activities related to one (improved monitoring and surveillance) of seven objectives accounts for 36% of the total budget.

The first joint committee meeting (in January 2023) noted that 97% of the budget of the 2017 – 2021 Protocol had been executed based on the implementation report provided.

The second joint committee meeting (in January 2025) reported 75% overall execution of the first instalment under the current Protocol.

When considering the total sectoral support funding, the execution rate for most of the seven objectives has been low and the total execution rate at the time of writing stands at 44%, with 75% of the Protocol period completed. Nevertheless, there has been progress and achievement in the specific projects/activities under the different priorities and objectives.

Under the sustainable fisheries priority, sectoral support has boosted monitoring, control and surveillance capacity through (i) the upgrading of the VMS, (ii) the implementation and maintenance of an electronic reporting system (ERS), (iii) support to the Competent Authority Seafood Hub. Funding has also helped improve safety and working conditions for artisanal fishers (for example through safety equipment and facilities, fencing and platforms for ice-making machines, and financial assistance to fishers' relatives via the Fishermen Welfare Fund). Some planned activities, such as training observers for deployment on Mauritian vessels and inspection missions to Seychelles, have progressed more slowly than anticipated.

Under the blue economy priority, the programme has supported awareness-raising and national dialogue on the blue economy and has facilitated Mauritian participation in regional and international meetings, seminars and workshops related to sustainable fisheries management and marine biodiversity. Other activities in this area, such as the development of aquaculture initiatives, the Balaclava Marine Park Centre, sign-marking and beacons along coral reef breaks, and a blue economy strategy, are at earlier stages of implementation or have not yet fully materialised.

Consultations with stakeholders and a review of programme documentation indicate that sectoral support has funded a relatively large number of small-scale activities, which may

increase administrative workload and make outcomes less visible. Stakeholders also pointed to scope for more structured reporting against targets and greater involvement of sector actors in identifying and following up priorities.

While there is room to improve prioritisation, communication, and the pace of implementation, the sectoral support programme has nonetheless delivered a range of useful benefits for the fisheries, aquaculture and blue economy sectors in Mauritius.

Promote the employment of local seafarers, improve infrastructure and encourage landings, support the non-EU country in the development of local fisheries and processing industry in the EU, domestic markets and those of certain non-EU countries. Creating employment directly and indirectly.

The Protocol helps sustain Mauritius' role as a regional tuna processing hub. Although catch volumes under the Protocol have been relatively low, they have contributed to landings for the 'Princes Tuna' company and to supplies from Seychelles and other countries. By providing raw material that complies with the rules of origin under the interim Economic Partnership Agreement¹⁹ – namely, within a shared 8 000-tonne quota for non-originating tuna for Mauritius, Seychelles and Madagascar – the Protocol supports employment for around 3 500 cannery workers in Mauritius, about half of whom are women. Use of Port Louis, local purchases, and sales to the cannery are estimated to generate the equivalent of around five full-time jobs.

The Protocol also provides for potential direct employment of Mauritian crew, with EU purse seiners expected to try to embark 14 qualified Mauritian seafarers per vessel when operating in Mauritian waters. In practice, this provision has seen limited implementation, due to difficulties in providing suitable lists of qualified crew, perceived skill gaps and logistical constraints linked to landings in Seychelles. In such cases, shipowners have instead paid a lump sum equivalent to the wages of the non-embarked crew, as provided in the Protocol.

Working and living conditions are framed by a social clause referring to relevant ILO conventions, notably ILO Convention C.188 and by the implementation of Directive (EU) 2017/159. However, compliance with these standards is not systematically checked in Mauritius and the social clause has not yet been updated to reflect more recent EU rules on private labour market services.

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

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

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

¹⁹ 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

To what extent does the FPA offer the EU value for money?

EU annual catches in the Mauritius fishing zone were poorly aligned with the annual reference tonnage of 5 500 tonnes identified by the Protocol to set the amount of the EU financial compensation for access. EU tuna vessels averaged an annual catch of 662 tonnes between 2023 and 2024.

As a result of EU tuna vessel catch performance in the Mauritius fishing zone, the average cost of access paid by the EU (EUR 843 per tonne, from the EU budget and shipowners) was a lot higher than the EUR 130 per tonne fixed *ex ante*. A similar pattern was observed under the previous Protocol, albeit not as significant, with misalignment with the reference tonnage.

To what extent does the Protocol offer EU shipowners value for money?

The economic and social analysis of the access component provided in the evaluation report (p. 20) concludes that EU tuna vessel operations in the Mauritius fishing zone have generated a positive gross profit of EUR 1.47 million over 2023 and 2024. About 74% of the total income originated from the activities of EU tuna purse seiners, with EU surface longliners accounting for 26% on average.

EU vessels paid access fees that corresponded to 31% of their income (39% for purse seine vessels and 17% for surface longliners) from the aggregated catches over the 2023 - 2024 period, and 85% (105% for purse seine vessels and 38% for surface longliners) as a percentage of value added over 2023 - 2024. Both indicators are considered high, and are due to the low catches obtained and the non-refundable advance payments made.

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

The analysis of the economic impacts of the Protocol shows that the EU received 28% of the total value added, Mauritius 50% of value added (the largest share), and other non-EU countries 22%. The share of value added accruing to the different parties was almost identical to those under the previous Protocol. The economic value added that benefited Mauritius is almost entirely composed of EU access payments (87%), due to low levels of economic interactions between the EU and Mauritius fishing sectors. Other items include upstream value added resulting from using the shipyard for maintenance and repairs, and downstream value added from processing catches made by EU purse seiners in the local cannery, which are attributable to EU catches under the Protocol (rather than in other areas of the Indian Ocean).

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

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

With annual sectoral support payments of EUR 450 000 envisaged, the contribution the Protocol provides for supporting and implementing Mauritius' fisheries and blue economy policy represents less than 1% of the annual budget of the relevant Mauritian Ministry. Nevertheless, the funding reflects needs in Mauritius for project-based funding, because a significant proportion of the government's regular budget is spent on salaries.

Date included in the joint committee minutes show that execution of funding from the previous Protocol was 91% at the time of the meeting in May 2023. The second joint committee meeting was delayed, in part because of a low execution rate of the first year's tranche of funding under the current Protocol so that the meeting could be held when the execution rate had reached 75%. Total execution of sectoral support funds was 44% at the time of writing with 75% of the Protocol period have expired. The capacity to absorb funds has been challenged by some procurement delays, and the need to include sectoral support projects as items in the government-approved budget for the following financial year.

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

The Protocol does not specify deadlines for payment of sectoral support funding, with funds provided based on needs identified as part of the agreed programming and on the basis of an analysis by the JC of the results achieved. As shown in Table 21, the EU made sectoral support payments to Mauritius rapidly following each of the JC meetings which approved the tranches of funding.

The JC meetings have considered the achievement of criteria and objectives, based on implementation reports prepared by Mauritius, as required. DG MARE does not verify expenses, but there is the possibility for the EU to conduct audits on the use of sectoral support payments to Mauritius.

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

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

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

The FPA between the EU and Mauritius and its current Implementing Protocol are consistent with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), particularly Articles 31 and 32 of the EU CFP Regulation²⁰. The FPA and its Protocol:

- Include the fundamental principles of governance of fisheries agreements (respect for democratic principles and human rights, transparency, non-discrimination)

²⁰ 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

between fleets, and the exclusivity clause). Some of the relevant clauses are contained in the Protocol rather than in the head agreement, because the head agreement dates from 2014.

- Identify fishing opportunities that are aligned with the conservation and management measures adopted by the IOTC.
- Provide specific financial support for the support and implementation of Mauritius's fisheries aquaculture and blue economy sectoral policy, which includes enhanced national capacities for monitoring and surveillance (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 Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar, and the adjacent high sea areas.

The FPA and its Implementing Protocol with Mauritius are part of a regional network of agreements effectively used by the EU tuna purse seine and surface longline fleet active in the Indian Ocean.

However, social provisions governing employment onboard EU tuna purse seiners (the social clause) do not reflect recent progress achieved through social dialogue at EU level. The social clause needs to be updated.

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

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

- Support for the implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement funded by the 11th European Development Fund (EDF). Activities implemented under this programme contributed to strengthening governance, and to improve the performance of Mauritius in export markets.
- Activities implemented under the Ecofish EU regional programme (budget of EUR 28 million) funded under the 11th EDF. Mauritius benefited from interventions under the national Chapter including support to Monitoring Control and Surveillance capacities.
- The recently approved Sustainable West Indian Ocean Programme (SWIOP) (EUR 58 million for nine countries), which will run from 2025 to 2030. The programme will support: i) international ocean governance; ii) sustainable fisheries and blue economy; and iii) coastal conservation and restoration.

These activities complement and are coherent with those implemented under the sectoral support programme, without duplication.

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

Mauritius' national sectoral policy for the fisheries sector and blue economy is framed by its three-year strategic plan for 2018/19 – 2021/22, the address by the President of the Republic of Mauritius on Friday 24 January 2025 on the Government Programme 2025-2029, the Ministry for Ocean Economy and Fisheries' 2023/2024 Annual Report, and relevant legislation such as the Fisheries Act 2023 and recent regulations.

The Ministry for Ocean Economy and Fisheries identified priority areas and activities – in line with national priorities - for the multiannual sectoral programme.

The Protocol's activities contribute to the achievement of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 (life below water) and in particular to the achievement of its targets 14.2 (protect and restore ecosystems), 14.4 (sustainable fishing), 14.7 (increase the economic benefits from sustainable use of marine resources – particularly to small island developing States), 14.8 (increase scientific knowledge, research and technology for ocean health) and 14.9 (support small-scale fishers and provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets).

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 such an Agreement or Protocol? To what extent would Member States have had the ability or possibility to put in place appropriate alternative measures? To what extent do the overall benefits of the Agreement and Protocol have an added value for the EU?

In the absence of a Protocol but with an FPA in force, EU shipowners would have been prevented from negotiating direct access due to the exclusivity principle. Catches, revenues, profits, value added and employment for EU stakeholders were thus supported by the intervention in the form of the Protocol. In the absence of an FPA (and Protocol), Mauritius could have engaged in direct private agreements with EU operators as it does with other foreign operators.

The EU intervention added value over both these scenarios in terms of the following features of the Agreement/Protocol, which would have been difficult or impossible to achieve without it:

- Multiannual access aligned with the needs of the EU fleet.
- Dialogue and direct exchanges of knowledge between EU and Mauritian authorities, in terms of scientific cooperation and a framework for joint monitoring and control of EU activities.

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

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 Mauritius in terms of governance, sustainability and national development. There is a strong added value of the EU intervention through FPA 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 the EU fleet could achieve outside the framework of the Agreement?

The current Protocol provides stable and guaranteed lawful access to Mauritian waters over a four-year period, which is supportive of the multiannual deployment strategy of EU purse seine vessel operators in the Indian Ocean. EU shipowners recognise the benefits that the Protocol has in supporting sustainability which ultimately benefits them, as well as the positive role that the EU plays in negotiating on their behalf. No stakeholders consulted suggested a preference for private agreements over the framework provided by the FPA.

4.5. Acceptability

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

To what extent are the EU shipowners satisfied with the Protocol?

Feedback from consultations show that EU shipowners unambiguously support the renewal of the Protocol with broadly similar conditions and would also prefer a longer Protocol. However, some suggested improvements like reduced licensing timelines, increased time for entry/exit notifications, and more flexible and proportional crewing rules.

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

Representatives of the civil society in Mauritius are critical of the Agreement overall, particularly in terms of potential bycatch. Cooperatives welcome the requirement for Mauritian crew on purse seine vessels.

For the activities implemented under the sectoral support, all representatives of civil society consulted in the EU and in Mauritius 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. They request more transparency on this component of the FPA is requested and opportunities for consultation and involvement in the implementation of some activities as appropriate.

No civil society representatives in either the EU or Mauritius suggested that the Protocol should not be renewed. All organisations were supportive of a change from an FPA to an SFPA. This would allow for moving the governance clauses (human rights, transparency, level playing, exclusivity) into the Agreement, thereby strengthening them.

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

Mauritian-based shore-based companies involved with the tuna sector (processing, cold storage, vessel repairs and maintenance, catch offloading), are all strongly supportive of the FPA/Protocol due to the access and sectoral support funding that results, and the economic linkages that do occur even if limited. Operators of Mauritian-flagged purse seine vessels do not view EU tuna vessels in Mauritian waters as negatively impacting on their activities in any way.

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

Based on the answers to the questions above, administrations in Mauritius and the EU, EU shipowners, and private sector parties in Mauritius are all generally satisfied with the Protocol and its implementation and seek its renewal. The Mauritian government expressed a willingness in principle for negotiations for the renewal of the Protocol at the end of 2026. The financial contributions are beneficial for the government, and the sectoral support programme is valued. Civil society organisations in both the EU and Mauritius also seek its renewal.

4.6. Relevance: Is the intervention still relevant?

Success criteria have been proposed and evaluated for each component (access and sectoral support).

To what extent do the objectives set out in the Agreement and the Protocol still correspond to the needs of the EU, its shipowners and Mauritius?

For the EU fleet operating in the Indian Ocean, the Agreement and Protocol are relevant as part of their network of fishing opportunities and to meet the needs of their fishing strategies. Relevance also stems from the linkages with onshore vessel support businesses and tuna canning in Mauritius.

The transfer of sovereignty over Chagos from the United Kingdom to Mauritius has not yet been finalised and it is not yet known if fishing would be permitted once this transfer takes place. However, if the transfer of sovereignty was completed during a future Protocol and if fishing were allowed in the waters around Chagos, this could further increase the relevance of the Protocol to EU shipowners.

For EU surface longliners, the continued relevance of the FPA is difficult to establish because of the low use of the fishing opportunities under the current Protocol and the previous one.

For Mauritius, the available surplus of tuna fishing opportunities needs to be made the most of through negotiations of access arrangements with third parties. Compared to private or other bilateral access arrangements which might be possible with other entities, the EU FPA/Protocol comes with a dedicated budget for sectoral support, decoupled from access funds, which supports implementation of the national fisheries and blue economy policy. In this respect, the Agreement and Protocol are considered highly relevant to the needs of Mauritius as confirmed by consultations with the Mauritian authorities.

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 Mauritius fishing zone, in keeping 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 charter²¹:

‘The Commission shall promote cooperation among its Members with a view to ensuring, through appropriate management, the conservation and optimum use of stocks covered by this Agreement and encouraging sustainable development of fisheries based on such stocks.’

For both the EU and Mauritius, the Protocol includes provisions which support the objectives of resource and environmental sustainability. In particular, it makes provision for catch reporting and for strengthening monitoring, control and surveillance and the observer scheme. It also requires vessels to comply with the laws of Mauritius on fishing activities and with the conservation management measures adopted by the IOTC. The sectoral support component includes activities contributing to the capacities of Mauritius to comply with the obligations stemming from its IOTC membership.

The bilateral framework of the FPA allows the EU and Mauritius to exchange views on specific issues relating to regional management of tuna resources. This underscores the relevance of the FPA and the Protocol to the IOTC’s objectives of promoting cooperation amongst contracting members to ensure - through appropriate management - the sustainable use of fishery resources.

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 three years of implementation shows that it met the main objectives:

²¹ Agreement for the Establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), <http://www.iotc.org/>

- For objective 1, the Protocol contributed effectively towards resource conservation and environmental sustainability by ensuring alignment between the FPA/Protocol technical and monitoring measures, the standards of the CFP, and the conservation and management measures adopted by the competent regional fisheries management organisation (the IOTC). The contribution to environmental sustainability was amplified by the allocation of 36% of the budget of the sectoral support programme to activities that help Mauritius monitor, control and surveil fishing fleets supporting improved MCS of fishing fleets by Mauritius.
- For objective 2, the Protocol effectively supported the continued fishing activity of the EU long distance fleet in the Indian Ocean, including in the EU's outermost regions. The agreement is effective in contributing to the regional network of fishing opportunities. Some port calls are made in Port Louis for vessel repairs or maintenance and direct landings to the Princes Tuna company. Technical fishing conditions imposed on EU vessels through the Protocol are similar to conditions for other vessels, supporting a level playing field. Financial conditions have a different basis but result in broadly comparable access costs for the tuna vessels from different States.
- For objective 3, the sectoral support of the Protocol is an important part of total government spending on fisheries sector management and development. It supported improvements in fisheries monitoring and enforcement, provided activities of benefit to small-scale fishers, helped with the planning for blue economy developments, and facilitated regional engagement.

5.2. Lessons learned

The *ex post* evaluation of the Protocol implementing the Fisheries Partnership Agreement for the period from 2022-2026 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 make some adjustments to address the shortcomings, namely:

- The low use of the maximum number of fishing opportunities available, in particular by the EU longline fleet segment;
- The low numbers of Mauritian fishers employed onboard EU vessels compared to the expectations of the Protocol;
- The inefficient use of the sectoral support funds resulting in a low execution rate;
- 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 civil society in the activities implemented under the sectoral support multiannual programme.

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. It reflects on the lessons learned and outlines the possible ways forward - through a set of available policy options - for implementing the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and Mauritius.

6.1. Problem analysis and needs assessment

In the context of the intervention logic shown 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 Mauritius

Mauritius has extensive maritime waters²² and a need to make the most of tuna resources surplus to the requirements of its own domestic tuna fleet - within a context of sustainable exploitation - to generate budget income. The Protocol also provides valuable employment for Mauritian nationals as crew and onshore socio-economic benefits generated through some direct landings, transshipments, tuna processing and vessel servicing.

Mauritius has ambitious fisheries, aquaculture, ocean and blue economy policies and strategies, with a strong focus on regional collaboration, investment, and growth. Its government would struggle to meet all the funding needs to implement policy on its own. Mauritius thus needs to secure extra-budgetary, multiannual sources of funding to address priorities for the fisheries, aquaculture and other blue economy sectors.

It is too early to say definitively or with any detail the potential areas of support that may be envisaged for sectoral support from 2027 onwards under a new Protocol. However, it can be expected that priorities would remain broadly as in the current sectoral support matrix, but with a stronger emphasis on blue economy objectives.

Mauritius has responsibilities as a flag State (fishing vessels flying the national flag), as a coastal State (fishing vessels authorised to fish in its waters), and as a port State (receiving catches into its ports). Those responsibilities entail having (or building) the capacity to ensure promotion of responsible fishing practices, to support the development of the national fisheries sector, and to ensure compliance with national,

²² Its Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ), without Chagos Islands, is estimated at 1.3 million km², the 25th largest EEZ in the world according to Marineregions.org / the Flanders Marine Institute VLIZ ([link](#) and Lonneville et al., 2021). EEZ: see definition in the Interactive Terminology for Europe (IATE) [here](#).

IOTC, and other international obligations. The Mauritian government is addressing challenges and weaknesses in these areas, but improvements are still needed and sectoral funding could help with these.

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: Life below water.

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

For EU operators of fishing vessels

EU purse seiners operating in the Indian Ocean 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 Mauritius fishing zone, supply 15% of EU consumers' needs for the supply of processed tuna products. EU fishing activities result in a part of the catch made in the Indian Ocean and in Mauritian waters going to the EU after processing in Mauritius. Some of the catch made in Mauritius but landed or transhipped in Seychelles is also destined for the EU market, following processing in Seychelles or in EU or non-EU countries. This confirms a need in the future for a continued supply of tuna from the Mauritius 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 Mauritius and the European Union

Both parties need a platform for bilateral sectoral dialogue with dedicated funding to promote responsible fishing practices and initiatives to combat IUU fishing in the Mauritius fishing zone, in synergy with other EU interventions in the region. 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

If the Protocol is renewed, only the EU will be 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, namely:

- Protecting the benefits achieved by the Protocol, because a failure to agree a new Protocol would mean that EU vessels could no longer fish in the Mauritius fishing zone under the exclusivity principle (FPA Article 6.1) and Mauritius would no longer receive any financial contributions for access and to help implement its national fisheries, aquaculture and blue economy 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 and ILO Convention C188 on work in fishing, 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 agreements²³.
- Allowing the EU to promote responsible fishing practices at sub-regional level through the leverage effects possible through a network of coherent fisheries agreements in Indian Ocean²⁴.
- 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.

²³ 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.

²⁴ At the end of 2025, the EU had four fisheries agreements: Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Mozambique, the last one being dormant.

- Giving the EU a legal mandate for monitoring EU fishing vessel activities in the Mauritius fishing zone.
- Providing a tailored bilateral instrument for cooperation in the fisheries sector with Mauritius and support for implementing Mauritius' sectoral fisheries and aquaculture and blue economy policies, which are separate from and 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 conclusions²⁵ on the external dimension of the CFP. In line with EU policy on fisheries agreements, the objectives of future intervention under the Fisheries Partnership Agreement concluded between the EU and Mauritius in 2013 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: Contributing to resource conservation and environmental sustainability through rational and sustainable exploitation of living marine resources of Mauritius and in the broader Indian Ocean.

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

- ✓ SO 1.1: facilitating access for the EU fishing fleet to exploit fishing opportunities granted to the EU by the IOTC, while improving transparency on all fishing efforts in Mauritian waters.
- ✓ SO 1.2: following the same principles and standards promoting fisheries management as applied in EU waters.
- ✓ SO 1.3: improving the scientific and technical evaluation of the fisheries concerned (notably by improving data collection and transparency on fishing efforts).
- ✓ SO 1.4: ensuring compliance and combating IUU fishing.

General objective 2: Contributing 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:

²⁵ Council conclusions on the external dimension of the CFP. 19.3.2012, Doc. 7086/12 PECHE 66.

- ✓ SO 2.1: providing fishing opportunities for highly migratory resources available in the Mauritius fishing zone, fully commensurate with the EU fleets' interests.
- ✓ SO 2.2: ensuring 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.
- ✓ SO 2.3: ensuring supply for the EU and for the markets of certain developing countries.
- ✓ SO 2.4: encouraging the creation of a secure environment that is favourable for private investment and economic activities.

General objective 3: Supporting the development of a sustainable fisheries sector in Mauritius.

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

- ✓ SO 3.1: helping Mauritius build capacity (notably by improving monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing activities, and scientific research).
- ✓ SO 3.2: helping Mauritius develop sustainable national fisheries, aquaculture and other blue economy sectors.

6.7. Policy options, including associated risks

Three options are available:

- Option 1 No negotiation with a view to concluding a new Implementing Protocol
- Option 2 No change to the current Agreement and Protocol (status quo)
- Option 3 Negotiation of a new Agreement with a revised Implementing 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: No negotiation with a view to concluding a new Implementing Protocol

Under this option, the Protocol would not be renewed:

- If the FPA remained in force but dormant, EU shipowners would be prevented from negotiating access due to the exclusivity principle, because Article 6.1 of the

FPA states that EU vessels can only fish in Mauritian waters if they have an authorisation issued under the Protocol to the Agreement. The EU would not give Mauritius any sectoral support, so neither the EU nor EU shipowners would pay financial contributions to Mauritius

- Alternatively, the FPA could be terminated, although this would be less likely as the absence of a Protocol is not one of the reasons for termination of the FPA set out in Article 12 of the FPA. If the Agreement was terminated, the EU would not provide any sectoral support to Mauritius. EU vessels could negotiate direct fishing authorisations with the Mauritian authorities. These authorisations would be issued subject to the rules set out by Regulation (EU) 2017/240349 which gives the European Commission a mandate to oversee the process. They would allow EU vessels access to Mauritian waters, but would not provide them with the stable and multiannual legal framework of a fisheries agreement. Furthermore, termination would send a negative signal impacting the quality of the cooperation between Mauritius and the EU.

The main risks associated with option 1 are:

- Difficulties for the EU fleet to maintain viable operations in the region, although the low catch levels in Mauritian waters during the current Protocol suggest that a failure to negotiate a new agreement would have only a limited effect on the financial viability of the EU fleet.
- An incentive for the EU purse seine fleet to reflag to other countries of the Indian Ocean to keep their access to the Mauritian fishing zone. This would make the EU less self-sufficient for tuna products for its market and decrease the influence of its MS flag States in the Indian Ocean.
- Decreased attractiveness of Port Louis and the 'CNOI' Indian Ocean Shipyard as a location for vessel repairs and maintenance due to absence of fishing opportunities in the Mauritian fishing zone and the potential to fish on the way to or from the port.
- A reduced budget for the Mauritian government, reducing its capacity to implement its national fisheries, aquaculture and blue economy policies.
- Damage to EU-Mauritius geo-political relations.

Option 2: No change to the current Agreement and Protocol (status quo)

Under this option, all current content of the FPA and Protocol would remain unchanged. This option would thus be reflected in a situation in which:

- A new Protocol lasts for four years.
- Fishing opportunities remain at 40 EU tuna purse seiners, 45 surface longliners, and supply vessels in keeping with IOTC rules.
- A reference tonnage of 5 500 tonnes a year.

- The EU pays financial compensation of EUR 275 000 a year for EU vessels to access Mauritian waters.
- EU shipowners pay the following fishing authorisation fees:
 - *For each tuna purse seiner:* Annual non-recoverable advance payment of EUR 9 360 corresponding to 117 tonnes catch at EUR 80 per tonne.
 - *For each surface longliner:*
 - > 100 GT: Annual non-recoverable advance payment of EUR 4 560 corresponding to 57 tonnes of catch at EUR 80 per tonne.
 - < 100 GT: Annual non-recoverable advance payment of EUR 2 400 corresponding to 30 tonnes of catch at EUR 80 per tonne.
 - *For each supply vessel:* Annual authorisation fee of EUR 5 000.
- Monitoring, control and surveillance requirements (e.g. catch reporting, observer and VMS requirements, bycatch provisions, etc.) all remain as per the current Protocol.
- The specific contribution for the support and implementation of Mauritius' sectoral policy (EUR 450 000 per year) provides funding for a four-year sectoral 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.
- The head agreement is a FPA not a SFPA.

The main risks associated with option 2 are:

- Unsatisfactory alignment between the fishing opportunities negotiated and their actual use by EU vessels.
- A failure by parties to agree on the content of the sectoral support matrix, given different views about priority objectives and needs, as well as implementation. However, this risk is not considered a major one, especially as sectoral support needs may continue broadly in line with those under the current Protocol.
- A failure by the Joint Committee to adequately monitor the implementation of the Protocol to achieve both its overall objectives as specified above, and the detailed arrangements and agreements contained within the Protocol and Annexes. This risk should be mitigated by ensuring that regular Joint Committee meetings are held as scheduled, are of sufficient duration to adequately consider all issues of relevance at the time, and by any future *ex post* evaluations carefully reviewing the functioning of the Joint Committee.

Option 3: Negotiation of a new Agreement with a revised Implementing Protocol

Under this option, differences between the status quo and the content of a new and amended Protocol are as follows (with other issues not raised below remaining as per the current Protocol):

- Fishing opportunities for tuna vessels adjusted to better reflect the number of authorisations issued during recent years and the number of EU vessels now active in the region following some recent re-flagging of vessels, while also allowing some leeway in case of an increase compared to the most recent two years.
- Corresponding reduction in reference tonnage to reflect the decreasing number of EU tuna purse seiners active in the Indian Ocean. This would address the lack of efficiency of the EU investment in the financial compensation for access to tuna.
- Improved social provisions on employing non-EU seafarers on board EU vessels, with revised terms allowing for more clarity and legal certainty for non-EU fishers and EU shipowners as regards their rights and obligations²⁶.
- A Protocol period of six years.
- Agreement during the first joint committee meeting of a more streamlined/focused multiannual matrix for sectoral support in order to respond to the sub-optimal disbursement rates during the current Protocol. This matrix would include well-defined and SMART²⁷ targets and indicators to allow the joint committee to monitor progress.
- Greater levels of consultation by the government in Mauritius in setting priorities, objectives and activities to be included in the sectoral support component, and more transparency over how funds are implemented and their results.
- Changing the head agreement from a FPA to a SFPA (of a six-year period) to better align the terms of Agreement with Articles 31 and 32 of the current CFP. This change would have a low impact as the current Protocol is already based on these two articles.

The main risks associated with this option relate to: i) efficiency; ii) administrative burden; and iii) levels of socio-economic benefits in Mauritius. They are:

- A continued misalignment between the financial compensation paid by the EU with the use of fishing opportunities by the EU fleet, with low uptake of authorisations and low catches - even under a situation of reduced fishing opportunities.
This risk relates to uncertainty over EU vessels' future interest in fishing in Mauritian waters based on:
 - i) the restructuring of the EU tuna fleet;
 - ii) naturally variable oceanographic conditions in the Mauritius fishing zone;

²⁶ The revised terms are mostly based on the EU Directive 2017/159 about ILO Convention C188 and the terminology is more aligned with the ILO terminology. They are based on dialogue with social partners and stakeholders in 2022, and have been being proposed by the EU to non-EU country partners for each new /renewed SFPA and Protocol negotiated since July 2024.

²⁷ Specific, measurable, agreed, realistic, timebound.

- iii) the location/migration of tuna stocks; and iv) the fishing strategy of EU vessels.
- Administrative requirements which would not increase in *absolute* terms but which would increase *in terms relative to the size of the Agreement*. Staff time and associated costs of administrative inputs would largely remain as per the current Protocol. (For example, it would still be necessary to hold Joint Committee meetings each year, for the EU to report catches to Mauritius each year/quarter, and for the Mauritian authorities to produce annual implementation reports.) However, the Protocol would have fewer benefits for the EU, because of the smaller catches, and fewer benefits for Mauritius, because of the smaller financial contributions.
- Actual employment of Mauritian fishers onboard EU tuna purse seiners still short of the objectives, due to a continuing mismatch between Mauritius' offer in terms of its qualified workforce and the crewing needs of the EU vessels.
- A continued low level of upstream and downstream value added in Mauritius from low levels of EU fleet activity in Mauritian waters and landings primarily taking place in Seychelles.

6.8. Results and impacts

6.8.1. Environmental-Economic-Social impacts

The following table compares the environmental, economic and social impacts of the different options. The impacts remain essentially qualitative.

In comparing the results between options 2 and 3 - both of which would ensure continued financial contributions and sectoral support from the EU to Mauritius - the different benefits would only be revealed following negotiations. They would also be based on authorisations taken up by EU vessels and catches made. This in turn would depend on the availability of tuna in the Mauritian fishing zone, which previous experience has shown is unpredictable from one year to the next.

Criteria	Option 1: No Protocol implementing the SFPA	Option 2: Renewed, unchanged Protocol (status quo)	Option 3: Amended and renewed Protocol with some adaptations
Environmental impacts	<p>Shared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less fisheries-dependent scientific data available <p>Mauritius</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer funds available to Mauritius to implement relevant sectoral support activities and to monitor and control fishing activities taking place in its waters 	<p>Shared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of fisheries-dependent scientific data on EU vessels in Mauritian waters to support stock assessments and ecosystem considerations <p>Mauritius</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of multiannual sources of funding (sectoral support) to implement research activities and support national capacities for monitoring, control and surveillance and combating IUU fishing 	<p>Shared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of fisheries-dependent scientific data on EU vessels in Mauritian waters to support stock assessments and ecosystem considerations <p>Mauritius</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of multiannual sources of funding (sectoral support) to implement research activities and support national capacities for monitoring, control and surveillance and combating IUU fishing
Economic impacts	<p>EU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings for the EU budget (≈ EUR 725 000 / year under the current Protocol) 	<p>EU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment of a financial contribution to Mauritius from the EU budget (amount dependent on the outcomes of the negotiations, but EUR 725 000 per year) 	<p>EU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment of a financial contribution to Mauritius from the EU budget (amount dependent on the outcomes of the negotiations, but likely

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible negative impacts on the economic performance of the EU tuna fleet if fishing opportunities lost in Mauritian waters cannot be replaced by fishing opportunities elsewhere 	<p>under the current Protocol)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic value added to EU shipowners and processors benefiting the EU as a result of the activities of the EU vessels in Mauritius (value depending on catches obtained) 	<p>reduced from the current Protocol in line with the reduced tuna fishing opportunities).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic value added to EU shipowners and processors benefiting the EU as a result of the activities of the EU vessels in Mauritius (value depending on catches obtained)
	<p>Mauritius</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of multiannual budget income stream from EU payments (from the EU and EU shipowners) 	<p>Mauritius</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiannual budget income stream from EU payments (from the EU and EU shipowners) – amounts dependent on the outcome of the negotiations and catches. • EU financial compensation to support the implementation of the national sectoral policy to encourage the economic development of fisheries, aquaculture and blue economy sectors - amounts dependent on the outcome of the negotiations but EUR 450 000 per year under the current Protocol) 	<p>Mauritius</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiannual budget income stream from EU access payments (from the EU and EU shipowners) – amounts dependent on the outcome of the negotiations but likely reduced from the current Protocol in line with the reduced tuna fishing opportunities • EU financial compensation to support the implementation of the national sectoral policy to encourage the economic development of the fisheries sector - amounts dependent on the outcome of the negotiations.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely reduced funds, but a more focused approach to use of funds and better monitoring resulting in greater net benefits per euro spent. • Reduced indirect economic benefits resulting from decreased attractiveness of Port Louis for the EU fleet (port services, reduced direct landings of tuna to local processors)
Social impacts	<p>EU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible negative impacts on employment onboard the EU fishing fleet (and in EU processing companies) if fishing opportunities lost in Mauritian waters cannot be replaced by fishing opportunities or catches elsewhere <p>Mauritius</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less funding available for activities supporting the 	<p>EU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment of EU nationals onboard EU vessels fishing in Mauritius (and in EU processors having access to EU vessel catches) secured by availability of fishing opportunities <p>Mauritius</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social benefits underpinned by activities of the sectoral support programme benefiting artisanal fishers in Mauritius • Employment conditions of Mauritian fishers and other nationals onboard EU 	<p>EU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment of EU nationals onboard EU tuna vessels fishing in Mauritius (and in EU processors having access to EU vessel catches) secured by availability of fishing opportunities <p>Mauritius</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social benefits underpinned by activities of the sectoral support programme benefiting artisanal fishers.

	<p>development of artisanal fisheries in Mauritius which are currently included in the sectoral support objectives and projects/activities</p>	<p>vessels framed by the current social clause</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits dependent on the outcome of the negotiations and funds provided, but a more focused approach to use of funds and better monitoring resulting in greater net benefits per euro spent • Employment conditions of Mauritius fishers and other nationals onboard EU vessels framed by an improved social clause
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7. COMPARISON ACCORDING TO STANDARD EVALUATION CRITERIA (RELEVANCE, EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY AND COHERENCE)

This table compares the different options in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and coherence.

Option 1 (No SFPA/Protocol)	Option 2 (Status quo)	Option 3 (SFPA and revised Protocol)
<p><u>Relevance to needs</u> – Low.</p> <p>Would not meet the needs of either the EU or Mauritius</p>	<p><u>Relevance to needs</u> – Medium.</p> <p>Meets most needs for most but not all stakeholders in the EU and Mauritius</p>	<p><u>Relevance to needs</u> – High.</p> <p>Meets the needs of stakeholders in the EU and Mauritius</p>
<p><u>Effectiveness</u> – Low.</p> <p>Absence of sectoral support has negative impacts on sustainable fisheries, and ability of Mauritius to implement its sector policy.</p> <p>Benefits created in direct and indirect gross value added and employment by EU vessels in Mauritius disappear.</p> <p>EU- Mauritius cooperation in the fisheries sector would be only under the general framework of EU-ACP cooperation dialogue instruments and within the multilateral IOTC framework</p>	<p><u>Effectiveness</u> – Medium/High.</p> <p>A new Protocol would be conducive to achieving sustainability for tuna stocks and support for Mauritius’ sectoral policy implementation, through its decoupled access and sectoral components.</p> <p>However, the effectiveness of the use of sectoral support funds would also be undermined by implementation arrangements</p>	<p><u>Effectiveness</u> – High.</p> <p>A new Protocol would be conducive to achieving sustainability for tuna stocks and support Mauritius’ sectoral policy implementation, through its decoupled access and sectoral components.</p> <p>Effectiveness of the use of sectoral support funds would be improved through enhanced implementation arrangements</p>
<p><u>Efficiency</u> - n/a</p> <p>No use of EU budget in this case</p>	<p><u>Efficiency</u> – Cannot be evaluated <i>ex ante</i></p> <p>The efficiency of the intervention depends on the relationship between the budgets identified under the next Protocol and the</p>	<p><u>Efficiency</u> – Cannot be evaluated <i>ex ante</i></p> <p>The efficiency of the intervention depends on the relationship between the budgets identified under the next Protocol and the</p>

	actual levels of activity of the EU fleet; as well as the results obtained through implementation of the sectoral support component.	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 and improved sectoral support performance per euro provided may improve performance compared to the status quo
<u>Coherence</u> – Low. Without a Protocol, the EU would have less resources to implement the sub-regional strategy according to the principles of the CFP. The general principles guiding the development policy would nevertheless continue to apply to the EU- Mauritius cooperation framework	<u>Coherence</u> – High. Protocol would make it possible to coherently implement both the objectives of the CFP and those of the EU development policy while enabling Mauritius to implement its national and regional priorities.	<u>Coherence</u> – High. Protocol would make it possible to coherently implement both the objectives of the CFP and those of the EU development policy while enabling Mauritius to implement its national and regional priorities.
<u>EU added value</u> – Low. For the EU, not implementing the FPA signed in 2014 through a new Protocol would not add value in the context of Mauritius	<u>EU added value</u> – High. The involvement of the EU is an obligation resulting from the existence of the FPA concluded in 2014 and of its exclusive competence in fisheries management	<u>EU added value</u> – High. The involvement of the EU is an obligation resulting from the existence of the FPA concluded in 2014 and of its exclusive competence in fisheries management
<u>Acceptability</u> – Low.	<u>Acceptability</u> – Medium.	<u>Acceptability</u> – Medium/High.

<p>Not acceptable to EU or (almost all) Mauritian stakeholders</p>	<p>The relevant authorities and private sector actors in Mauritius support the principle of negotiating a new Protocol, while non-state environmental actors would need to view the specific contents of a new Protocol and the sectoral support contents to determine if they support it.</p> <p>EU shipowners support the renewal of the Protocol.</p> <p>EU civil society organisations and social partners have concerns over aspects of current sectoral support content and its implementation, and enforcement of labour standards, so would prefer to see improvements rather than the status quo.</p>	<p>The increased length of the Protocol would provide more certainty to the Mauritius Government and EU fleets and would be more acceptable to them than option 2⁵⁴.</p> <p>The relevant authorities and private sector actors in Mauritius support the principle of negotiating a new Protocol, but reduced levels of access and thus financial compensation would reduce acceptability compared to option 2.</p> <p>Non-State environmental actors in Mauritius would need to view the specific contents of a new Protocol to determine if they support it, but would be more likely to do so with reduced EU access.</p> <p>Non-state social partners in the EU would find option 3 more acceptable due to improved social provisions.</p> <p>EU and Mauritian civil society/environmental organisations have concerns over aspects of current sectoral support and its implementation. Improvements in specification, implementation and transparency arrangements would make these aspects more acceptable.</p>
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7.5. Preferred option

Option 3 - leading to the renewal of the Protocol of the Agreement between the EU and Mauritius, with some amendments and a change in the head agreement from a FPA to a SFPA - should be favoured. The revised Protocol set out in option 3 would better meet both parties' needs than the unchanged Protocol set out in option 2.

The main advantages of option 3 compared to the current Protocol are:

- i) improved proportionality between the number of fishing authorisations available and their foreseeable use (relevance of the intervention), and,
- ii) more focused use of sectoral support funds and better monitoring (enabled through improved specification of targets and indicators) would generate better results for Mauritius per euro spent.

The non-renewal of the Protocol (option 1) would deprive the EU of an instrument to meet the needs of various stakeholders and its own needs in strengthening global ocean governance. Non-renewal would damage relations between the EU and Mauritius, reduce financial resources available to Mauritius, and undermine the continued strengthening of the capacity of the Mauritius government for effective and efficient management of its fishery sector.

7.6. Monitoring of a future Implementing Protocol

Following its entry into force, the SFPA and Implementing Protocol with Mauritius should be subject to continuous monitoring and evaluation through a technical dialogue with the Mauritian Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries on the Agreement and the Protocol.

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

- 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 multiannual sectoral support matrix that includes indicators for relevant SMART²⁸ outputs, results and impacts (as appropriate) and associated targets.

²⁸ Specific, measurable, agreed, realistic, timebound

- 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 meeting at least once a year to assess both (i) implementation of the Protocol in light of the log frame and (ii) success in implementing the sectoral support matrix, by monitoring progress based on indicators.
- Technical bilateral dialogue where necessary (including missions to Mauritius), to prepare the Joint Committee or follow up implementation of its decisions or 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 renewal by following the normal legislative procedures in both the EU and Mauritius, without interrupting the possibilities of access.

ANNEX I: PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

PLAN/2024/2074 - EU-Mauritius Fisheries Partnership Agreement and Protocol – negotiation mandate

1. Organisation and timing

<u>Tasks</u>	<u>Time</u>
<u>Signature of the contract</u>	<u>22/08/2025</u>
<u>Kick-off meeting</u>	<u>29/08/2025</u>
<u>Report from the kick-off meeting</u>	<u>05/09/2025</u>
<u>Submission of the inception report</u>	<u>19/09/2025</u>
<u>Meeting to discuss inception report</u>	<u>23/09/2025</u>
<u>Submission of the draft final report</u>	<u>18/11/2025</u>
<u>Meeting to discuss draft final report</u>	<u>26/11/2025</u>
<u>Submission of the final report</u>	<u>12/12/2025</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, both 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 forward-looking evaluation, the questions focus on identifying problems and needs, the objectives to be achieved, the options available (whether or not to conclude 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 August 2025 to December 2025 under the guidance of an interservice steering group established by different services of the European Commission and under the terms of reference of specific contract number 14 under the framework contract MARE/2021/OP/0001. The evidence base of this evaluation study consisted of two main components: (i) analysis of available documentation and (ii) 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 August 2025 and December 2025. Conducted under the guidance of an interservice 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 Joint Committee meetings held since the Protocol became applicable.
- Reports from the various DG MARE technical missions to Mauritius
- Information the two parties exchanged on implementing sectoral support: programming and monitoring documents, implementation reports prepared by Mauritius, etc.
- Data on fishing authorisations and catches by EU vessels in the fishing zone covered 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 through the financial contribution identified in Article 6 of the Protocol (DG MARE budget monitoring).

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

2. Consultations

The consultations carried out for 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

Mauritius, 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 Mauritius:** a mission was organised in Mauritius in consultation with the EU and Mauritius parties in October 2025. During the mission, face-to-face discussion sessions were held with the various departments of the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries involved in monitoring the Agreement, representatives of the private sector in the industrial and artisanal sectors, and environmental NGOs. Representatives of the EU Delegation in Port Louis were also consulted.

3. Preparation of the evaluation study

The EU's recommended tools and guidelines were taken into account during the evaluation study, along with the methodological elements specific to the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy (such as those on the methods for evaluating the socio-economic impact of EU SFPAs).

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

<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 Mauritius		
1.1 To what extent fisheries activities addressed exclusively at surplus resources 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?	<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 RFMOs.</p> <p>The Protocol considers the management strategies expressed by RFMOs, RFOs and Mauritius.</p> <p>Mauritius takes part in the relevant RFMO/RFOs and provides data on activities carried out by vessels flagged to it and by other foreign fleets operating in its waters.</p>	<p>State of the stocks targeted under the Protocol (scientific advice analysis that Mauritius conducted, meetings, regional scientific reports, and data, RFMO/RFO and national scientific institutes).</p> <p>All fleets catches and fishing effort in Mauritius and in the region; possible impact on the environment of all the fleets operating in these waters.</p> <p>(All of the above considering that the target species - mainly tuna - are highly migratory species).</p>
1.2 To what extent the implementation has followed the same principles and promotes the same standards for fisheries management as applied in EU waters?	<p>The EU and Mauritius adopt management measures to reduce bycatches and discards and to reduce the possible impacts on the ecosystem.</p>	<p>State of the stocks taken as bycatch by EU vessels.</p> <p>Management measures adopted at the regional, national or EU level or under the Protocol.</p> <p>Strategies aimed at conservation measures for protected species.</p>

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Success criteria</i>	<i>Suggested indicators</i>
1.3 To what extent have the scientific and technical evaluation of the fisheries concerned improved?	<p>EU fishing activities are subject to an appropriate reporting obligation framework (logbooks, VMS, observers, etc.) in the Agreement and a scientific data collection framework (size composition of the catches, biological parameters etc.). This information is sent to the relevant RFMOs and national research institutes.</p> <p>EU scientists and Mauritius scientists actively participate in scientific meetings and RFMOs/RFOs scientific committees.</p>	<p>Inclusion of data collection provisions in the Agreement and timely availability of relevant data at the management and scientific operators.</p> <p>Amount and quality of data collected.</p> <p>Number of reports to RFMOs and scientific institutes.</p> <p>Participation rate in RFMOs/RFOs scientific committees.</p> <p>Results achieved with sectoral support.</p> <p>Number of meetings between scientists and managers at country level.</p>
1.4 To what extent do the Agreement and its Protocol help ensure compliance and control of the EU fleet activities?	<p>The activity of the EU fleet is properly monitored (VMS, AIS, observers, 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 bycatches, and catch composition, possible infractions are sanctioned; sectoral support is used to improve monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS).</p>	<p>Level of implementation of the monitoring provisions in the Agreement and its Protocol.</p> <p>Level of implementation of the monitoring, reporting and control provisions.</p> <p>Results achieved with sectoral support in terms of MCS.</p>

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

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Success criteria</i>	<i>Suggested indicators</i>
<p>2.1 To what extent do the Agreement and the Protocol seek an appropriate share of the surplus resources, commensurate with the EU fleet's interests and its regional and sub-regional fishing strategy, and considering activity of other non-Mauritius vessels in its waters (whether or not based on access Agreements)?</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Use of fishing authorisations. Use of fishing opportunities. Catches in waters covered by the current Agreement and its Protocol compared to overall catches at national, regional and sub-regional, level if appropriate. Employment (direct and indirect jobs). Changes in the number of EU vessels in the Mauritius waters, in the region. Contribution to the supply of the EU market and EU processing sector (volume and value) and to the local processing sector. Use rate of derogations on rules of origin provided for in Economic Partnership Agreements concluded with the EU in the region, and relevance for the Agreement and its Protocol.</p>

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Success criteria</i>	<i>Suggested indicators</i>
2.2 To what extent is the level of fees payable by Union shipowners for their fishing activities fair and proportional (considering the revenues and costs), non-discriminatory and promotes a level playing field among the different fleets?	<p>The Agreement and its Protocol offer similar conditions to all foreign fleets operating in the fishing zones and management areas in the current Protocol.</p> <p>The cost-benefit ratio is acceptable and reasonable for the EU shipowners and for Mauritius.</p>	<p>Level of fees and technical conditions applied to non-EU country fleets in the fishing zones and management areas in the current Protocol.</p> <p>Proportion between fees, (all) costs and (all) benefits for the EU shipowners and for Mauritius.</p>
2.3 To what extent do the Agreement and the Protocol allow an appropriate supply of the EU, Mauritius and its neighbouring countries' markets?	<p>The Agreement offers a reasonable framework to foster landings and thus supplying local markets and trade with non-EU countries.</p> <p>The Agreement fosters trade on fisheries cooperation between the EU and Mauritius and/or non-EU countries.</p>	<p>Percentage of landings versus local and neighbouring countries market's needs.</p> <p>Trade figures on fish (and composition) between the EU and Mauritius.</p> <p>Trade balance and relation with Mauritius and neighbouring countries related to fish caught in Mauritius waters.</p>
2.4 To what extent do the Agreement and its Protocol encourage the creation of a secure environment that is favourable to private investment and economic activities contributing to the sustainable development of Mauritius and strengthening its cooperation	<p>Some of the fish caught under the Agreement supplies local market and processing industry.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Agreement has a major impact at regional level.</p> <p>There are synergies between the implementation of the Agreement and the economic and social</p>	<p>Number of initiatives to improve Mauritius port services standards.</p> <p>Number of initiatives to ensure cooperation between local and EU economic operators.</p> <p>Benefits that such activities brought locally and to the EU.</p> <p>Number of initiatives with positive outcomes at a local, national and regional level.</p> <p>Scale of the benefits.</p>

with the EU?	development of the country.	
To what extent do the Agreement and its Protocol consider the specific interests of the EU's outermost regions located in the vicinity Union's fleet?	The Agreement covers the specific needs of the EU fleet based in outermost regions and in the EU by ensuring the continuity of their fishing grounds	Number of vessels originating from the outermost region operating under the Agreement and percentage of catches comparted to total catches. Number of EU vessels originating from other EU regions operating under the Agreement and percentage of catches comparted to total catches.
<p>Objective 3: To support the development of a sustainable fisheries sector in EU partner countries (through the governance framework that the Agreement creates, cooperation on the blue economy, and through the sectoral support for small-scale and artisanal fisheries, for job direct and indirect creation, for development of the local and national sectoral policies, etc.) and through analysis of geographic, social, environmental, and economic impacts.</p>		
<i>Questions</i>	<i>Success criteria</i>	<i>Suggested indicators</i>
3.1 To what extent do the Agreement and its Protocol contribute to capacity building and social, environmental and economic sustainable development in Mauritius?	The sectoral support and implementation of the Agreement creates economic activity and improves (i) the functioning of the fisheries sector, (ii) governance, (iii) transparency, (iv) inclusiveness, and (v) social and economic development of the area covered by the current Protocol. It also provides for adequate training, equipment and infrastructures in the areas of science and monitoring, control and	Results achieved with sectoral support and environmental, socio-economic impact of the implementation of the current Protocol. Percentage of the EU contribution to the different strategies, policies and value of indicators for assessing the socio-economic, environmental impact in the EU and in the partner country. Comprehensiveness and level

	<p>surveillance.</p> <p>Due reporting on use of the sectoral support (detailed results on expected environmental, economic and social benefits).</p>	<p>of detail of the sectoral support reporting and cooperation on science, MCS, Blue Economy, artisanal fisheries, environmental conservation and policy areas.</p>
<i>Questions</i>	<i>Success criteria</i>	<i>Suggested indicators</i>
<p>3.2 To what extent do the Agreement and its Protocol promote employment of local fishers, improved infrastructures, respect of working conditions, including health and safety encourage landings, support the partner country in developing local fisheries (incl. artisanal) and the fish processing industry to supply the domestic, regional and/or EU market? To what extent do they contribute to (direct and indirect) to decent job creation?</p>	<p>EU vessels recruit some of their staff locally and make them benefit from decent work, good working conditions including health, safety and appropriate training for both men and women, equivalent to ILO core labour standards and ILO Conventions in force.</p> <p>Part of the catches are landed and processed locally.</p> <p>Catches are landed, traded in the local and neighbouring markets.</p> <p>Trade flows are generated.</p> <p>Identification of elements that facilitate or discourage trade relations.</p>	<p>Respect of the minimum number of local fishers embarked.</p> <p>Catches (value and volume) landed, catches processed and catches marketed locally.</p> <p>Employment created directly and indirectly in the EU and in Mauritius or in the (sub)region.</p> <p>Fair recruitment for men and women.</p> <p>Number of occupational labour accidents.</p> <p>Percentage of supplies to the local and neighbouring markets.</p> <p>Percentage of the fish caught by the EU fleet that supplies these markets and comparison with other supply sources.</p>

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

Questions	Success criteria	Suggested indicators
To what extent does the Protocol offer value for money to the EU?	The EU financial contribution for access is commensurate with all fishing opportunities offered by the current Protocol and per category.	Use of the fishing opportunities and positive cost-benefit ratio per category and overall.
To what extent have the sectoral support and cooperation on blue economy actions, policy area, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, food security, etc. agreed in the initial programming, been achieved at reasonable cost?	All activities included in the sectoral support have been properly used and of environmental, social, and economic benefit to Mauritius and possibly the EU.	Degree of completion of the initial programming. Percentage of sectoral support activities and projects compared to overall EU contribution, to the national budget for fisheries, marine and maritime issues and to other donor contributions. Contribution to the sustainable development of the country.
To what extent does the Protocol offer EU shipowners value for money?	The EU shipowners' contribution is commensurate with effective catches and profits compared to total costs and benefits.	Volume of catches. Changes in first sale prices, operating and all costs and estimation of the profitability for each segment of the EU fleet, category, vessel, gear type (if applicable).
To what extent is the financial compensation for the fishing possibilities under the Agreement advantageous for the EU and for Mauritius?	Mauritius benefits from a fair part of the added value of the catches and all financial compensation. This financial compensation is distributed fairly socially and geographically in Mauritius.	Ratio overall EU contribution /added value generated by the activity of the EU fleet in the fishing zone. Ratio of the benefits of all financial compensation to the concerned population proportional to the fishing activities. Ratio of the economic and social indicators.

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
<p>To what extent is all the EU contribution and specifically its sectoral support commensurate to the needs of Mauritius and absorption capacity?</p>	<p>The total EU contribution is in line with national and local needs and absorption capacity.</p> <p>The total amount of sectoral support is used as planned in the calendar and adapted to the needs of the country.</p> <p>Any modifications to the initial programming of the sectoral support have helped make better use of the financial support and contributed successfully to the sustainable development of the country.</p>	<p>Consumption of the EU contribution for sectoral support and geographical distribution compared to the local and national needs in the related policy area.</p> <p>Geographical and social distribution impacts and benefits from all financial compensation.</p> <p>Absorption capacity of the sectoral support.</p> <p>Success stories.</p> <p>Percentage of sectoral support compared to the national and local budget for fisheries and to other donor contributions.</p>
<p>To what extent were the sectoral support payments paid on time and in line with the relevant provisions of the current Protocol?</p>	<p>Contributions paid in line with the Protocol provisions and allocated to the national or local budget in compliance with the Protocol.</p> <p>Achievement of the criteria reports and procedures, budget, financial indicators and methods of control and audit.</p> <p>Achievements of annual and multi-year objectives</p>	<p>Calendar of payments and considered allocations.</p> <p>Results of the budget and financial indicators and methods of control and audit.</p>

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

Questions	Success criteria	Suggested indicators
<p>To what extent have the objectives set out in the Agreement and the Protocol still correspond to the needs of the EU, its Member States, and its shipowners? Should there have been different objectives?</p>	<p>Agreement and its Protocol implemented in line with the objectives of resource and environmental sustainability. Development of a sustainable fisheries sector supported at national and local level. Coastal States better integrated into the global economy. Improved scientific and technical knowledge. Economic exchanges supported. More sustainable economic and social development. More effective governance. National and local needs and those of the EU and its fleet correctly addressed.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>How is the Agreement and Protocol relevant to the policy objectives of RFMOs and the EU's regional network of fisheries Agreements? To what extent are they relevant and create an important impact?</p>	<p>Achievement of objectives set at RFMOs. Maintenance of network of FPAs in the region on fisheries management and scientific issues. Creation of synergies with the EU and neighbouring countries, including at regional level, at RFMOs.</p>	<p>Comparison between FPA 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.</p>

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

Questions	Success criteria	Suggested indicators
How coherent is the Protocol with the CFP in general and with its external dimension and the regional fisheries policy (RFMOs and other organisations)?	The Protocol is in line with the CFP in general. It helps achieve EU objectives at regional level, the EU's zero-tolerance approach to IUU fishing, and is consistent with RFMOs' and other organisations' objectives or other EU interventions.	Consistency with the main EU strategies / policy orientations. Including the implementation of social clauses, the contribution to sustainable food security. Overall coherence of the Agreement with EU policies in the region and in the country.
To what extent is the Protocol and its implementation consistent and coherent with and complements other EU policies (such as the Association Agreement, the EEAS, DG INTPA, DG SANTE, DG TRADE, DG EMPL and DG TAXUD policies and legislation)?	The Protocol makes a substantial contribution to other EU policies and conversely. The Protocol and its implementation are coherent and cooperate very positively with other EU interventions, in particular with the relevant programmes supported by DG INTPA, and EU countries.	Consistency with the main EU strategies and policy orientations (incl. on human and labour rights). Consistency of approaches and interventions; no duplication of activities; synergies created.
In what ways are the Agreement and Protocol consistent with the national fisheries policy and other related policies and well coordinated with regional fisheries policies and EU cooperation?	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 levels.	Consistency with the national and regional fisheries, marine and maritime policies, and sectoral policies in the country. Improved governance of the country. Better protection and sustainable management of natural resources and society.

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

Questions	Success criteria	Suggested indicators
<p>What is the additional value resulting from the EU intervention under the Protocol, compared to the absence of Protocol?</p> <p>To what extent would Member States have had the ability or possibility to put in place appropriate alternative measures?</p> <p>To what extent do the overall benefits of the Agreement and Protocol add value for the EU?</p>	<p>Successful use of the financial contribution (namely the sectoral support) to support and develop the national and local fisheries sector.</p> <p>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 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.</p> <p><i>Note: 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>Data on the implementation within the current Protocol in economic, social, and environmental terms compared to other agreements or with no Agreement.</p> <p>Data supporting evidence of progress in development of sustainable fisheries sector of Mauritius (incl. data reflecting the development of the fleet, infrastructure, control capacity, income and the state of marine resources and ecosystems) and usefulness of the access arrangements for the EU fleet thanks to the EU action, compared to results that could have reasonably been obtained (e.g. results obtained in another country considered as a benchmark) with and/or without other arrangements in place, in the absence of an EU Agreement.</p>
<p>What is the additional value resulting from the EU intervention under the Agreement and the Protocol compared to what could be achieved by the EU fleet outside the framework of the Agreement?</p>	<p>The Agreement and its Implementing Protocol provide substantial benefits to the EU and nationally and locally over private Agreements.</p>	<p>Uptake of fishing authorisations.</p> <p>Use of fishing opportunities.</p> <p>Use rate of derogations on rules of origin provided for in Economic Partnership Agreements concluded in the region, and relevance for the Agreement and its Protocol.</p> <p>Comparison of all costs and benefits of operating under this Agreement, other (S)FPAs and private agreements.</p> <p>Degree of legal certainty provided by the Agreement and its legal framework.</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
To what extent are the EU shipowners satisfied with the Protocol?	The EU shipowners are satisfied with the technical and financial conditions set up by the Protocol and support its renewal (with possible adaptations).	Results of interviews of shipowners and fisheries associations
To what extent is the Protocol developed in consultation, coordination and supported by civil society in the EU and nationally and locally?	Representatives of the civil society are consulted, involved, and satisfied with the environmental and social conditions set up by the FPA and its Protocol and support their renewal (with possible adaptations).	Results of interviews of NGO representatives and other stakeholders, local populations, seafarers' and fishers' representatives or associations, fishing operators in the EU and at the local, national, regional levels
To what extent is the Protocol supported by the sector (shipowners, traders, and processors) in the EU and in the partner country, nationally and locally?	The national and local shipowners do not experience competition from the EU fleet. Fish processors benefit from purchase opportunities generated by the Protocol and support its renewal.	Results of interviews of industry, fishing operators, NGO representatives, seafarers' and fishers' representatives, or associations. Reports of any incidents between fleets.
To what extent are the authorities, stakeholders and civil society in general satisfied with the implementation of the Protocol?	National and local administrations, stakeholders and society in general give a positive opinion on the implementation of the Protocol's obligations.	Level of compliance with the Protocol's obligations (landing obligations, observers, data reporting, socio-economic impact of the Agreement's implementation on national/local population, communication activities and their impact, communication activities, press statements, content of articles, social media, etc.).

ANNEX IV. OVERVIEW OF BENEFITS AND COSTS

The tables below show cost and benefits compared to no FPA/Protocol. In most cases, EU fleets and EU Member States would have the same obligations and costs associated with control and enforcement of vessel activity either in the Mauritius fishing zone or in the broader competence area of the IOTC, and the Mauritius authorities would have similar control and enforcement costs if they allowed EU vessels access to their waters. Recurrent costs are annual. Sources of information are shown in brackets.

		EU citizens/ consumers	Mauritius citizens/ consumers	EU businesses	Mauritius businesses	EU countries' administrations	Mauritius' administration	EU Commission services
Costs	one-off / recurrent	Monetary value, ranges and/or qualitative comment						
Direct compliance costs								
Negotiation of Protocol	one-off	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Some staff time, but not quantifiable	2 person months FTE estimated (DG MARE)
Design of sectoral support component	one-off	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Some staff time, but not quantifiable	n/a
Enforcement costs								
Sectoral support oversight	recurrent	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1/2 FTE/year estimated (Ministry)	1/4 FTE/year estimated (DG MARE)
Data management, licensing and vessel oversight	recurrent	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1/12 FTE/year estimated (consultants)	1/2 FTE/year (Ministry)	1/8 FTE/year estimated (DG MARE)
Benefits	one-off / recurrent	Monetary value, ranges and/or qualitative comment						
Direct								
Financial compensation for access (EU and shipowners)	recurrent	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	EUR 558 000 2023-2024	n/a

Sectoral support for admin. / management, MCS, and research/science	recurrent	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	EUR 450 000 / year (Protocol)	n/a
EU catches in Mauritius to consumers (after processing)	recurrent	662 tuna fish (≈ 277 tonnes canned tuna) average 2023-2024)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Direct value added to EU fleet	recurrent	n/a	n/a	EUR 199 000 annual average 2023-2024	EUR 257 000 annual average 2023-2024	n/a	n/a	n/a
Crewing/employment (FTE)	recurrent	5 = annual average 2023-2024	0 = annual average (2023-2024)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Indirect								
Indirect value added	recurrent	n/a	n/a	EUR 195 000 annual average 2023-2024	EUR 151 000 annual average 2023-2024	n/a	n/a	n/a
Upstream/downstream employment (FTE)	recurrent	4 = annual average 2023-2024	5 = annual average 2023-2024	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Background

In line with the Terms of Reference and the Better Regulation ‘toolbox’, the independent consultant produced a strategy for obtaining evidence from relevant stakeholders. The strategy set out the best means of consulting relevant stakeholders both in the EU and in the partner country concerned.

Objectives

The aim of the consultation was to:

1. get stakeholders’ views on the implementation of the ongoing protocol and on the possible renewal of the protocol, including the different options;
2. 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, EU fishing vessels with a possible interest in obtaining such fishing opportunities in the future
- Competent authorities of EU countries whose fishing vessels use fishing opportunities under the current Protocol and have 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 or organisations of seafarers signed on board EU fishing vessels
- Development cooperation organisations of EU countries active in Mauritius

For the full list of targeted organisations consulted, see the table of stakeholders provided at the end of this Annex.

Method of consultation

- By electronic consultation on the basis of questionnaires (Q) tailored to each of the target groups in three languages (Spanish, French, English). Supplemented, where appropriate, by video calls (VC).

Results of the consultation

Response rate: 52%

Total number of organisations consulted (outside European Commission DGs, LDAC and MAC): 21

Number of replies received: 10

Stakeholder	Contribution
Stakeholders in charge of the implementation of the FPA	
Spain: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food / MAPA - International Fisheries Relations Department	Provided (Q)
France: <i>Ministère de l'Écologie, du Développement Durable et de la Mer / DG AMPA</i>	Not provided
<i>Italy: Ministero dell'agricoltura, della sovranità alimentare e delle foreste</i>	Provided (Q)
Portugal: <i>DGRM - Direção-Geral de Recursos Naturais, Segurança e Serviços Marítimos</i>	Not provided
Stakeholders who are direct beneficiaries of fishing opportunities	
OPAGAC (purse seiners - Spain)	Not provided
ANABAC (purse seiners - Spain)	Provided (Q)
ORTHONGEL (Purse seiners – France and Italy)	Provided (Q)
CRPMEM – Regional Fisheries Committee of Réunion (Longliners –France)	Not provided
OPNAPA - <i>Organización de Productores Nacional de Palangre de Altura</i> (Longliners – Spain)	Not provided
ADAPI (longliners – Portugal)	Not provided
ORPAGU (longliners – Spain)	Not provided
ARVI (longliners – Spain)	Responded (Q) but declined to comment as no vessels using Agreement
Stakeholders with an interest in the SFPA	
EEAS / EU Delegation in Mauritius	Provided (IP)

Stakeholder	Contribution
Pew Charitable Trusts	Not provided
Europêche	Not provided
European Transport Federation	Provided (Q)
CAPE/CFFA	Provided (Q and VC)
COGECA	Not provided
WWF	Not provided
Environmental Justice Foundation	Responded but declined to comment (Q)
Oceana	Provided (Q)
Long Distance Advisory Committee (LDAC)	Informed

See Annex 8 of the evaluation study for information on the exact content of the consultation, including detailed responses of the stakeholders.