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COVER NOTE

From:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director
To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
No. Cion doc.:	COM(2026) 701 annex
Subject:	ANNEXES to the COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Vision 2040 for fisheries and aquaculture

Delegations will find attached document COM(2026) 701 annex.

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ANNEXES 1 to 2

ANNEXES

to the

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Vision 2040 for fisheries and aquaculture

{SWD(2026) 750 final} - {SWD(2026) 751 final} - {SWD(2026) 752 final} - {SWD(2026) 753 final}

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ANNEX I

EU strategy for fisheries external action

1. Promoting the sustainable management of global fisheries and upholding the rules-based multilateral maritime order

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the global fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and regional cooperation through Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) must continue to be the cornerstones of international cooperation on fisheries.

Integrity of the Law of the Sea and its comprehensive fisheries frameworks

- The European Union (EU) will promote the ratification and full implementation of the UNCLOS and its implementing agreements, in particular the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) and the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement (BBNJ), as well as the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) and the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, relevant instruments of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

- The EU will continue to advance these objectives through its bilateral and multilateral dialogues and relevant international fora.

EU international leadership with a zero-tolerance approach to IUU fishing

- The Commission will ensure that Member States fully apply the IUU Regulation, alongside tighter customs and port controls overall. The full implementation of the digital catch certificate (CATCH) is a gamechanger and will ensure the protection of the EU single market from IUU fishing products.

- To support Member States in the implementation of the IUU Regulation, the Commission will inform their custom authorities of those non-compliance findings of RFMOs that could be relevant in identifying the risks of invalid catch certificates.

- The EU will continue to engage in structured dialogues with third countries based on active engagement and capacity building. If such efforts do not lead to significant improvements in a given country supplying the EU, the EU will not hesitate to close its market to those fish imports.

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- The EU will promote broader international effort among like-minded countries to ensure that major markets can effectively eliminate IUU fisheries products.

RFMOs fit for tackling old and new challenges

The EU will seek to strengthen RFMOs as fundamental pillars of international fisheries management in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). Priorities will be to:

- Sustain the EU's presence in different parts of the ocean and actively defend the legitimate fishing rights of its fleet and promote the operational standards of its fleet in environmental, social, and economic terms.

- Complete the global coverage of RFMOs where fish stocks or fisheries activities in ABNJ are not currently covered by a competent RFMO.

- Strengthen the governance of RFMOs. This includes promotion of unbiased scientific evidence for management decisions and smooth and transparent decision-making. In doing so, the EU will keep promoting selectivity and sustainability of fishing gears as well as coherence with multilateral environmental agreements protecting endangered species (CITES, CMS) and ecosystems.

- Integrate fishery-related climate change considerations more systematically in RFMOs by incorporating climate change considerations systematically in the scientific work and models of RFMOs.

- Strengthen compliance and transparency as essential pillars for ensuring sustainability and a level playing field, through the full and effective implementation of conservation and management measures, the streamlining and harmonisation of RFMO compliance processes, the fulfilment of reporting obligations, and the adoption within in RFMOs of complete and detailed compliance reports.

- Promote synergies between RFMOs and the bodies and institutions of the BBNJ Agreement. The EU should work to ensure that the RFMOs internal frameworks are 'fit for purpose', be it to engage in preliminary discussions to shape BBNJ processes, to engage in exchanges with other RFMOs to coordinate positions and input, or to respond to consultations from BBNJ bodies in the future. At the same time, the EU should promote consultation mechanisms within the BBNJ context that enable meaningful and effective involvement of RFMOs.

- Ensure that RFMO management measures are effectively turned into EU rules.

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2. Tackling global overcapacity and unfair competition

Eliminating harmful fisheries subsidies at the global level

- The EU will continue to implement the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, which entered into force on 15 September 2025. The Agreement addresses subsidies contributing to overfishing, fishing on the unregulated high seas, and IUU fishing.

- The EU will continue to engage with the WTO membership to eliminate certain types of harmful fisheries subsidies such as subsidies contributing to overcapacity and overfishing and deliver on UN Sustainable Development Goal 14.6.

Promoting strong monitoring, control and surveillance

- To ensure implementation of the UNFSA and the PSMA related to the responsibilities of flag, coastal and port States, the EU will aim to achieve transparency on which vessel is authorised to fish what, where and when and to promote responsibilities of flag States and coastal States across the multilateral, regional and bilateral levels of action.

- The focus will be on ensuring the existence of an accurate fleet register in all countries; ensuring the equipment of all vessels with vessels monitoring systems (VMS) and electronic logbooks; enhancing the set of monitoring and control means; encouraging a wider and more systematic use of electronic tools for automated communications of control data, based on international standards (UN/FLUX); proper enforcement of multilateral agreements, RFMOs conservation and management measures and SFPAs provisions, including the streamlining of compliance procedures across RFMOs and adequate sanctions; and working on the forums where the shortcomings are most evident and EU has the most possibility to influence.

Transparency as a core pillar of any effective strategy against IUU fishing

All pillars on which global fisheries governance rests (core international agreements, RFMOs conservation and management measures, fight against IUU fishing) are fundamentally weakened by gaps allowing some countries and operators to bypass the responsibilities of flag, port and coastal States, namely regarding transshipments at sea, flags of convenience and ultimate beneficial ownership. All can ultimately facilitate illicit activities and IUU fishing and find their source in weak flag State controls.

- The EU will support the progressive development of a global exchange of information on vessels, through the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels, for vessel registration and identification, and the PSMA Global Information Exchange System, for inspection reports and port denials. The EU will promote the transmission of data collected through more efficient MCS to these global information systems, their regular updating, as well as improvements to these systems. To that end, the EU will continue to promote the development and use of electronic tools, and the

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transmission and sharing of these data, using international standards (UN/FLUX) and support the modernisation of data exchange in RFMOs and developing countries.

- The EU will advocate for strengthened requirements on authorisation, monitoring and reporting of transshipment activities on the high seas, standardised reporting and information-sharing on transshipment events, and the use of ports for transshipment controls.

- The Commission will follow up on its recent study on flag State responsibilities and open registers for vessel registration by advancing concrete measures to address risks of open registers acting as flags of convenience.

- The Commission will work with Member States to boost cooperation between fisheries, customs, port and tax authorities to streamline risk-based import controls, further integrate digital systems and improve exchange of information on fisheries and aquaculture products. Particular attention should be paid to products originating from high-risk jurisdictions by making better use of relevant information available across EU frameworks, including customs, IUU fishing, anti-money laundering and tax non-cooperation.

- The EU will actively promote responsible flag State practices and accountability and transparency on beneficial ownership at a global level. This includes actively contributing to the work in relevant international organisations, such as FAO and OECD as well as within RFMOs, strengthening exchanges with like-minded partners, strengthening compliance by flag States in line with applicable international instruments on vessel registration and ownership and control structures relevant to the fight against IUU fishing.

3. Strengthening social responsibility

Violations of international labour standards remain pervasive in international fisheries, whether concerning forced labour, decent working conditions, occupational health and safety and freedom of association and collective bargaining.

- The EU will continue to promote universal ratification and effective implementation of ILO international labour standards[1]. In this context, the EU will emphasise the importance of enforcement mechanisms and dispute resolution procedures, and social

[1] Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No 87), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No 98), the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No 29) (and its 2014 Protocol), the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No 105), the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No 138), the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No 182), the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No 188) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006).

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dialogue and collective bargaining as a way of achieving balanced solutions by peaceful means.

- In fisheries management frameworks, the EU will continue to promote ILO conventions and a clear set of social provisions with SFPA partners, and within RFMOs, the EU will support work on improving social standards.

4. Engaging at the regional level

Northeast Atlantic

The Northeast Atlantic provides most EU catches and is undergoing structural shifts. The EU's relations in the regional setting have been strained due to disagreements over quota allocation, while Brexit and the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine contributed to reshaping fisheries relations in the Northeast Atlantic. It is crucial to overcome the lack of cooperation within NEAFC and the coastal States' framework and to support stock recovery and socio-economic resilience to environmental and climate change. The EU must also make use of the broader Atlantic policy context and regional platforms to promote broader cooperation on the joint management of quota and non-quota stocks, science and scientific advice and the sustainable use of the maritime space. The full implementation and compliance with the 1920 Treaty of Paris on the Archipelago of Spitsbergen, in all maritime zones of that archipelago, remains a key priority for the EU.

- The EU will aim to achieve stable, predictable and legally robust fisheries arrangements that safeguard its quota and market interests and are based on the best available scientific advice, contribute to prevent overfishing and support stock recovery through stable and predictable long-term management strategies.

- The EU will promote increased cooperation and technological developments to decrease overfishing, ensure climate resilience, reduce unwanted catches and promote the rapid recovery of stocks in poor condition.

- The EU should strengthen cooperation with the UK and other coastal States towards the development of a broader joint agenda on fisheries management, for both quota and non-quota stocks, built on stronger scientific coordination and strengthened scientific advice systems capable of adapting to environmental and climate change.

- The EU will continue to pursue similar principles and control standards for non-EU operators as those of the EU.
- The EU should pursue a more integrated and structured approach to its cooperation with Northeast Atlantic neighbouring countries across all cooperation frameworks. Building on the experience from the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), the EU should pursue a structured approach that links sustainable management of shared stocks

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with stable market access and EU interests. Such cooperation should be anchored within the broader EU Atlantic policy agenda, particularly as increasing competition for maritime space calls for increased cross-sectoral coordination with coastal States through regional platforms, such as the Greater North Sea Basin initiative and the Atlantic strategy.

Mediterranean and Black Seas

The Mediterranean holds a prominent position on the EU's political agenda, highlighted by the Pact for the Mediterranean. The Pact provides a framework for coordinated regional cooperation with Mediterranean countries and a strategic opportunity to support shared sustainability goals. Continuing to strengthen fisheries bilateral relations and collaboration within the two RFMOs governing fisheries in the area, GFCM and ICCAT, is key to ensuring a level playing field and requires the full engagement of relevant sectors and local communities.

- The EU will make fisheries cooperation part of its broader strategic engagement in the Mediterranean, be it under the Pact for the Mediterranean, in RFMOs or in the Union for the Mediterranean. Fisheries will also be a key aspect in relations with non-EU countries.

- In the Black Sea, the EU will place particular emphasis on strengthening regional cooperation within the GFCM and as part of the EU's enlargement policy.

- The EU will seek full enforcement of RFMO decisions, focusing on compliance. Monitoring, control and surveillance measures, additional joint inspection schemes, appropriate follow-up of infringements, compliance and enforcement, and fight against IUU fishing, will continue to be top priorities for the EU's work under the GFCM and ICCAT.

- The EU's main focus within the GFCM will be to strengthen the regional governance framework. For the new MedFish4ever Ministerial Declaration, to be adopted in 2027, and the future Declaration for the Black Sea, the EU will build on past successes while addressing gaps, including persistent overfishing, IUU fishing activities, and the accelerating impacts of climate change, in particular on the spread of non-indigenous species. To turn commitments into action, the EU will champion binding sustainability commitments, ensuring non-EU countries uphold core international standards for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, combat IUU fishing, engage proactively in RFMOs, and embrace a cooperative agenda. The EU will seek linking accountability with solidarity through targeted technical and financial support.

A new generation of sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs)

In West Africa, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific region, the EU's SFPAs have long served as a pillar of the EU's external fisheries policy. These agreements go beyond access to waters. They

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are partnerships that promote the sustainable management of stocks, reflect the EU's presence in all parts of the ocean also through its outermost regions, contribute to global ocean governance goals and provide a stable long-term framework for the activities of the EU long-distance fleet. As the world faces growing pressures from climate change, overfishing, and geopolitical competition, SFPAs must evolve to meet these challenges while delivering greater fairness, transparency and effectiveness. The new generation of SFPAs aims at improving policy coherence across the EU's external action, strengthening sustainability and science, enhancing the regional approach, delivering better value for money, reinforcing transparency, improving the level playing field, addressing misinformation and improving communication, and strengthening the implementation and impact of sectoral support. Concretely, it will:

- Ensure that the SFPAs are fully integrated into the EU's broader external policies. Joint Committee meetings – the decision-making bodies of SFPAs – will systematically address cross-cutting issues. This includes combating IUU fishing and advancing the BBNJ Agreement. The Commission will also seek greater synergies with broader EU partnerships, including Global Gateway, trade policy, and environmental diplomacy.

- Assess the opening of negotiations with new partner countries, subject to sufficient budgetary resources, on the basis of criteria such as alignment with EU priorities and policies, respect for democracy and human rights, support to ocean governance and sustainability, cooperation in/with RFMOs as well in UN/FAO and other relevant international organisations, fight against IUU fishing and sustainable management of the stocks, as well as current and future fishing opportunities.

- Further strengthen sustainability and continue to make science the backbone of the agreements. The Commission will further promote data collection and management decisions based on the best available scientific advice. Compliance with the applicable RFMO provisions and the provisions of the relevant SFPA will continue to be strictly monitored

- Better embed SFPAs in a regional approach to address shared fisheries and ocean governance challenges and provide better opportunities for both the EU fleet, including in outermost regions, and partner countries. The Commission will work to harmonise access conditions across SFPAs in the same region, reducing regulatory fragmentation and unfair competition. It will explore facilitating regional dialogues among SFPAs partners or potential partners on sustainable fisheries management, also in the context of relevant RFMOs.

- Prioritise the use of sectoral support to align with EU objectives and international commitments, including on implementation of the PSMA, ratification and compliance with the WTO Agreement and ILO conventions, compliance with RFMOs measures, the fight against IUU fishing and the implementation of the BBNJ agreement, and focusing on scientific support, observer programs and monitoring, control and surveillance. The sectoral support can fund actions to support the sustainable fisheries

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sector as well as sustainable aquaculture, the wider blue economy and decarbonisation, and ocean observation.

- Enhance the coherence of sectoral support with other EU funds, and where possible, associate it to wider bilateral or regional programmes on the blue economy or fisheries financed under the Global Europe instrument, including Global Gateway projects.

- In line with European Court of Auditors' recommendations, the Commission will explore how to better align the SFPA financial contribution to actual fishing activity and ensure better value for taxpayer money of the EU contribution paid for access.

- Seek to ensure stricter enforcement of non-discrimination and transparency clauses so that EU and other international operators compete on even level playing field. The Commission will also address the issue of dormant agreements and find the right balance between promoting ocean governance through SFPAs and giving the EU fleet the opportunity to compete with third countries' fleets under fair conditions.

- Put greater transparency and accountability at the core of SFPAs. The Commission will seek to expand beneficial ownership transparency, supporting partner countries in this endeavour. The Commission will also seek to step up its communication on Joint Committee meetings, and on the results of the sectoral support it provides to SFPA partners.

- Better engage local stakeholders, including fishing communities, civil society, and media. Awareness campaigns will be considered to help counter false narratives and position the EU's sustainable fisheries model as a global benchmark.

- Address misinformation and improve communication, proactively highlighting the tangible benefits of SFPAs, such as job creation, infrastructure investments, scientific cooperation, and revenue generation for partner countries.

5. Building more sustainable supply chains through rules

Strengthening implementation of existing trade tools and measures

- The EU will use the institutional frameworks under the Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) chapters of free trade agreements (FTAs) to ensure effective implementation of sustainability commitments of its trade partners.

- The EU will engage in the WTO Committee on Fisheries Subsidies to ensure the full implementation of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies by other WTO Members that have accepted the Agreement.

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- The EU will effectively implement the amended IUU Regulation (in particular CATCH) and the Forced Labour Regulation as a priority.

- The EU will continue assessing any measures by third countries against the Regulation on non-sustainable practices by third countries (Regulation (EU) No 1026/2012).

Gradually strengthening existing trade tools and measures

- The EU will use opportunities offered by any potential upcoming modernisation of existing FTAs to propose upgrading, where appropriate, provisions related to fisheries and aquaculture sustainability, aiming to ensure a coherent and up-to-date level of commitments with all EU's privileged commercial partners.

- The EU will introduce ambitious social and environmental sustainability requirements in the Autonomous Tariff Quota (ATQ) regime for fisheries products, building on the ongoing back-to-back evaluation and impact assessment.

- The EU will continue to engage with the WTO Membership to conclude negotiations on additional ambitious provisions of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies on overcapacity and overfishing.

- The Commission will ensure that the guidelines and risk database of forced labour risks under the Forced Labour Regulation is effectively implemented in the fisheries sector.

- The EU should incorporate the impacts of feed for aquaculture in its overall approach to trade measures.

6. Using ocean diplomacy for sustainable fisheries worldwide

Further strengthening the coherence and impact of its external fisheries action

- The EU will ensure that its participation in RFMOs, the conclusion of SFPAs and its fight against IUU fishing are mutually reinforcing and leveraged to foster the full implementation of key international agreements, through targeted diplomatic engagement and using the EU's IUU framework to incentivise compliance with international obligations, including in respect of labour standards.

Further integrating sustainable fisheries and aquaculture into relevant areas of external relations

- The EU and its Member States will make more systematic use of existing bilateral frameworks to boost coherence and effectiveness across fisheries external policy and

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development, trade, political dialogue, and cooperation on environment, climate, social issues and research.

Strengthening partnerships, cooperation and alliances

- The EU will support relevant plurilateral initiatives and further develop partnerships with third countries and alliances with like-minded countries. This includes building on existing efforts such as the 2026 G7 statement on IUU fishing, and aims to promote sustainable fisheries management and strengthen cooperation on fisheries governance in a changing geopolitical context.

Supporting capacity building and investment in developing countries

- The EU and its Member States should make a targeted use of Global Gateway, the Global Europe instrument and the SFPA's sectoral support for the mobilisation of the private sector and cooperation with relevant international financial institutions in support of sustainable fisheries management in developing countries.

- To improve fisheries governance systems, the Commission will focus on scientific advice, monitoring, control and surveillance, combating IUU fishing and strengthening labour rights. The Commission will also take into account partner countries' track record in implementing commitments, international agreements and contractual relations with the EU, where relevant.

Supporting climate adaptation and resilience

- The EU will further support efforts by partner countries to integrate fisheries considerations into their climate adaptation plans, boost the resilience of coastal communities, and encourage regional cooperation on climate-related fisheries management and stock monitoring.

Promoting inclusive governance

- The EU and its Member States will support cooperation between EU experts and their counterparts in partner countries through the exchange of best practices and peer learning, and by facilitating dialogue with relevant stakeholders. This includes the outermost regions, the fisheries sector, civil society and the scientific community in order to improve fisheries management and foster a shared understanding of challenges and solutions.

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Boosting communication and outreach

- The EU will boost communication and outreach in the international domain, including towards partner countries and in relevant international fora. The aim is to improve awareness and promote its actions in support of sustainable fisheries and ocean governance.

7. Strengthening cost efficiency, transparency and sustainability of rules applying to the EU fleet operating in external waters

- Following the evaluation of the regulation on the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems in the high seas[2] and the ongoing evaluation of the Sustainable Management of External Fishing Fleets Regulation[3], the Commission will assess how to reduce overlaps and address gaps in sustainability indicators and ultimate beneficial ownership in the authorisation process. The Commission will aim to improve the availability of beneficial ownership information in relevant European and national registers and databases.

- The Commission will support Member States in systematically identifying and addressing ownership links between EU nationals and foreign-flagged vessels, in particular where such practices are associated with IUU fishing risks. In addition, the Commission will consider the application of transparency and IUU fishing prevention rules also to joint ventures partly owned by EU companies or nationals in third countries.

[2] Evaluation of Council Regulation No 734/2008 on the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems in the high seas from the adverse impacts of bottom fishing gears, SWD(2025) 5 final.

[3] Regulation (EU) 2017/2403 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2017 on the sustainable management of external fishing fleets, and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1006/2008.

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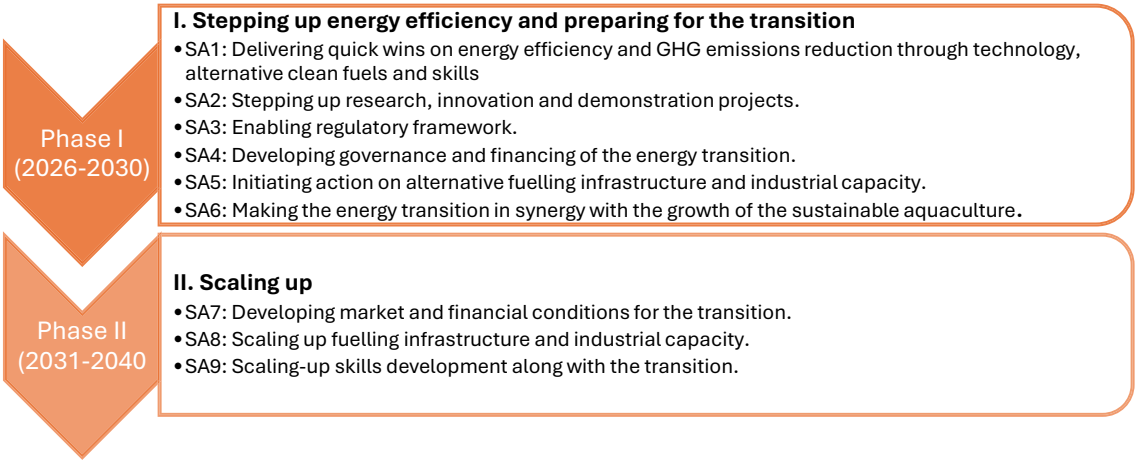
ANNEX II

The energy transition roadmap for fisheries and aquaculture

The roadmap sets out a pathway for the energy transition in the **fisheries and aquaculture** sectors. It serves as an integral pillar of the Vision for fisheries and aquaculture for 2040, aiming to support strengthening the sectors' competitiveness, resilience and sustainability. To guide stakeholder action, the roadmap sets a clear direction, structured around a set of strategic implementation actions.

The roadmap focuses on specific near-term actions grounded in the best available knowledge, while remaining flexible and requiring updating as the transition progresses and new information and technologies emerge. The detailed analytical underpinning and considerations for the energy transition roadmap are provided in the accompanying staff working documents on the energy transition in fisheries (SWD(2026) 752) and in aquaculture (SWD(2026) 753).

Figure 1 1 Schematic overview of energy transition roadmap for fisheries and aquaculture



Phase I: stepping up energy efficiency and preparing for the transition (2027-2030)

Strengthening **energy and resource efficiency** is the most direct way to improve the **economic resilience** and competitiveness of EU fisheries and aquaculture in the short term, while also making progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. From 2027 to 2030, priority should be given to encouraging the uptake of currently available efficiency measures, while at the same time laying the foundations in terms of governance, enabling framework, and technology development for the energy transition in the long run.

Funding and financing

The implementation of the strategic actions proposed in the roadmap will need to be supported by both private investments and public funding. On EU funding, the recent Commission proposal amending the EMFAF Regulation is aimed at simplifying the applicable requirements

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to facilitate funding for the energy transition in the short term[4]. This is particularly the case for pilot projects in real conditions. Importantly, the next EU budget (multiannual financial framework) for 2028-2034 will allow Member States and regions to make comprehensive plans for investment of shared-management arrangements. The roadmap can support Member States' preparation of their national and regional partnership plans (NRPPs). The European Competitiveness Fund may equally offer opportunities to support the transition.

In line with the Vision, the roadmap considers that future public funding should focus on de-risking mechanisms, particularly for pilot initiatives, innovative or higher-risk projects. The Commission, Member States, the financial institutions, including the European Investment Bank (EIB) and national promotional banks will work together to mobilise financing solutions tailored to the specificities of fisheries and aquaculture. This includes venture capital, equity and guarantee instruments, which will be an important enabler of the energy transition.

Strategic action 1: delivering quick wins on energy efficiency and GHG emissions reduction through technology, alternative clean fuels and skills

The high vulnerability of parts of the EU fishing fleet and some segments of the aquaculture sector to sudden changes in fuel prices calls for a swift adoption of measures to strengthen the sector's resilience. Energy-efficiency measures such as low-drag gears, lighter trawl doors, alternative approaches to steaming and routing, fuel monitoring, engine revisions and smaller hull design optimisation are already available on the market (and being adopted by the sector). Similarly in aquaculture, existing measures, such as in energy management, insulation and electrification can already reduce energy costs and emissions. They provide the most viable solutions for short-term progress on energy efficiency and can be supported under current funding schemes. Furthermore, to facilitate investments and awareness, energy audits can support fishers and aquaculture operators in identifying most suitable solutions for stepping up energy efficiency. Acknowledging that certain segments of the fishing fleet are hard-to-abate for several reasons, including technological, economic or fleet age, vessel owners on those segments should also consider currently available (drop in) alternative clean fuels or technologies such as in the area of energy efficiency as solutions to rapidly reduce GHG emissions. Furthermore, demand for clean fuels could be stimulated by financial incentives, for example resulting in a reduction or a reversal of the price differential between conventional and alternative clean fuels.

Training and knowledge transfer is crucial to equip fishers, aquaculture producers and other stakeholders with the skills and competencies needed to assess and adopt energy efficient practices and effectively use new technologies. Skills developments are crucial along the whole period of the transition. In this phase of the transition, this requires focusing on understanding needs and currently available training, while scaling up skills development as new technologies are adopted more widely in the sectors. The Commission's blue generational renewal strategy, to be developed in 2027, will address persisting training and skills gaps to attract trainers, senior

[4] A call for evidence was launched in June 2026 to gather stakeholder feedback on the possible amendment.

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and young professionals to blue economy careers and support long-term sustainability and innovation, including in the fisheries, aquaculture and adjacent sectors.

The Commission will:

- with the ETP, launch a survey to support the identification of skills and training needed to support actions under the ETP Ambassador programme and support Member States in tailoring support to fishers.

Member States are invited to:

- Use the EU funds and the opportunities offered, including the recent EMFAF Commission amendment proposal, in particular for pilot projects, to support fisheries and aquaculture operators in reducing energy costs and emissions. This can be done through energy audits for fishing vessels and aquaculture service vessels and production facilities, and through the adoption and the uptake of fuel monitoring and reporting tools to improve energy efficiency.

Strategic action 2: stepping up research, innovation and demonstration projects

Many technologies needed for a complete transition away from fossil fuels are not yet fully economically and/or technically viable[5]. There is a **need to further step up research and innovation**. This includes innovative energy-efficient, low-impact gears, low-carbon propulsion methods, vessel designs, infrastructure and energy-efficient operations, energy-efficient production methods, low-carbon feeds for aquaculture, digitalisation, such as the use of AI.

Action needs to be taken to ensure market uptake and to turn research and innovation into tangible benefits. Pilot projects and demonstrators in real conditions, at local and regional level and through strong collaboration between end users, gear producers, researchers and authorities, are critical to bridge the gap between research and market deployment. These efforts can benefit from developments in innovation ecosystems in the wider maritime sector, including through the future EU Industrial Maritime Value Chains Alliance (EMA), but also the Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport Partnership (ZEWT), Horizon Europe initiatives, including EU Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters[6].

The EMFAF can support the development, testing, auditing, and dissemination of energy-efficient and low-carbon technologies in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and the Commission's upcoming proposal for an amendment will reinforce these opportunities. As of 2028, the European Competitiveness Fund may provide new opportunities for support. The Energy Transition Partnership (ETP) will be the main tool to support knowledge sharing and dissemination on research and innovation at EU level for fisheries. For aquaculture, the Commission, with the support of the EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism,[39] will continue

5 Techno-economic analysis for the energy transition of the EU fisheries and aquaculture sector, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2926/425550

6 Mission Ocean – the Commission has awarded in 2026 four new projects to support the energy transition in the sectors.

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supporting knowledge sharing and dissemination of innovation and good practices, based on the staff working document on energy transition and the work of the ETP.

The Commission will:

- build on the guide on financing[7], to provide up-to-date information on available current and future funding and financing opportunities under the multiannual financial framework to support Member States and stakeholders in finding opportunities to launch projects that support market uptake and scaling up of innovative solutions for the energy transition.

Stakeholders are invited to:

- make use of the possibilities offered by the future European Competitiveness Fund in clean transition and industrial decarbonisation and under the Horizon Europe framework programme, to support the energy transition in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

Strategic action 3: enabling regulatory framework

A fit for purpose regulatory framework is important to facilitate the energy transition in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. The Commission has recently conducted an evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation[8], which serves as the basis for future policy orientations.

The Commission will:

- reflect the needs for the energy transition within the implementation and future policy development of the common fisheries policy (CFP), in line with the CFP evaluation, and in particular:
    - consider if further clarification or adaptation is needed to the rules for the transition towards alternative fuels and low-carbon practices in the long run, while continuing to ensure progress on balancing effective fishing capacity with the available fishing opportunities;
    - enable innovation and piloting in real conditions of clean and efficient technologies for the energy transition in fisheries and aquaculture, including propulsion.

Member States are invited to:

- promote the energy transition in the fisheries sector by providing incentives to operators who fish in the least environment and climate damaging way, including energy-t and low and zero-carbon practices, when allocating fishing opportunities in line with Article 17 of the CFP Regulation, and following the guidance in the 2025 *vade mecum*[9];

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7 Guide on financing the green energy transition of fisheries and aquaculture – Supporting the energy transition in fisheries and aquaculture through EU funding opportunities under the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework, NextGenerationEU and beyond, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2771/377801

8 SWD(2026) 120 final.

9 C(2025) 7655 final ANNEX.

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- make use of the available inactive fleet capacity below national capacity ceiling for enabling the energy transition without increasing fishing pressure;
- ;
- promote the energy transition in the aquaculture sector by providing incentives to aquaculture producers to adopt low-carbon production practices, technology and innovation.

Strategic action 4: governance of the energy transition

Delivering on the energy transition requires that action is taken across sectors and at all levels of governance, in a coordinated way. Without it, there is a risk of misalignment of investments, fragmentation of policies and unequal social and economic outcomes of the transition. Due to the high diversity of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors across the EU, a tailored approach is needed at national, regional and local level. The EU will continue playing a role in enabling exchanges between Member States and stakeholders on the energy transition at EU level.

The Energy Transition Partnership will continue to be the platform for capacity building and information exchange for the energy transition for the fisheries sector. It will aim at facilitating the implementation of the roadmap by sharing knowledge, monitoring and raising awareness on economically viable energy transition solutions and innovations in line with the Vision 2040 objectives.

For aquaculture, the Commission, with the support of the EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism, will facilitate the implementation of the roadmap and continue supporting knowledge sharing and dissemination of innovation and good practices. The Commission will also support Member States and the industry on the energy transition in the context of the technical seminars with Member States experts as well as work with the Aquaculture Advisory Council.

Moreover, the EU Sustainable Aquaculture Initiative announced in the European Ocean Pact will facilitate collaboration among different actors playing a role in the energy transition of this sector. To improve monitoring of progress on the transition at EU level, such as on fuel types and emissions, the commission will explore opportunities with Member States under existing data collection frameworks.

The Commission will:

- set up a network with Member States authorities, as a continuation of the ETP Pilot ambassador programme, under the Energy Transition Partnership to facilitate knowledge sharing, best practices and lessons learnt on the energy transition in fisheries across EU regions and stakeholders;
- update the compendium of projects and best practices, to provide a single-entry point for EU projects on the energy transition in the fisheries sector and aquaculture, on the ETP website and the Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism respectively, including the input from stakeholders;
- work with Member States to define and test the future data needs to monitor the transition towards alternative fuels (including fuel mix, engine types and related

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indicators), building on the existing EU data collection framework and on the recommendations of the regional coordination groups for data collection;
- organise an annual flagship event, building on the ETP Champions initiative, as a showcase that brings together the sector and solution providers, disseminates progress, and promotes deployment of solutions supporting the energy transition in EU fisheries.

Member States are invited to:

- join the ETP Ambassador network to share knowledge and best practices, and benefit from the ETP resources to provide support to fishers achieve their energy transition.

Strategic action 5: initiating action on port infrastructure and industrial capacity

Substantial investment in ports, alternative fuels, electricity grids and industrial capacity will be needed to facilitate the fisheries and aquaculture sectors' long-term energy transition. This must align with EU's and national initiatives on alternative fuel infrastructure and industrial maritime growth to create the right conditions for change, in line with the EU port strategy, the EU industrial maritime strategy, as well as the European grids package[10].

In particular, the sustainable transport investment plan (STIP) creates demand and supply conditions to ensure the maritime sector's access and availability to low carbon and alternative fuels are more widespread[11], benefiting the supply as well to the fisheries sector.

The EU industrial maritime strategy will contribute to promoting the conditions necessary for the decarbonisation of the sector. It will mobilise different tools to support investment, innovation, research and development in maritime manufacturing facilities in Europe and improve the global level playing field while ensuring the availability of a skilled workforce.

The EU ports will support the electrification of ports, including through the deployment of onshore power supply (OPS) through better monitoring, pricing transparency and demand forecasting. It also includes dedicated initiatives[12] to smaller and medium ports that often serve the fishing and aquaculture sector.

The upcoming revision of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR) will consider measures to further accelerate the deployment of alternative fuels for maritime sectors.

The Renewable and Low-Carbon Fuels Value Chains Alliance (RLCF) will, by the end of 2026, assess infrastructure capacity and future needs for the supply of renewable and low-carbon fuels in and to ports, to support investment planning.

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10 COM/2025/1005 European grids package.

11 The main actions specifically dedicated to securing a production and market of sustainable maritime fuels are designed to reduce the price gap between eligible fuels and fossil alternatives, connecting fuel producers and buyers to de-risk investments including through double-sided auctions for sustainable maritime fuels, and secure that sufficient fuel is delivered to the maritime sector through the revision of the Energy Union package.

12 Actions include funding and financial capacity building and project preparation by the EIB advisory hub, Promoting of electrification of industrial sites and clusters with the upcoming electrification action plan, and pilot projects on integration of alternative energy sources.

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The EU Industrial Maritime Value Chain Alliance will bring together shipyards, equipment manufacturers, research actors and operators in relevant market segments to shorten lead times from demonstration to commercial roll out, map needs and best practices, de-risk investments and strengthen the case for fleet renewal.

The Commission will:

- encourage participation of stakeholders from the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the future EU Industrial Maritime Value Chains Alliance;
- ensure that the needs of fisheries and aquaculture regarding access to clean energy and alternative fuels in ports are taken into account in the implementation of the EU Ports Strategy, particularly in small and medium-sized ports, including through the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure under alternative fuels infrastructure (AFIR) and related pilot projects supporting the energy transition.

Member States are invited to:

- support enabling infrastructure, including non-discriminatory grid access and suitable land-based and port-side connections, in those areas where this is relevant for aquaculture operations, in line with the EU sectoral legislation, such as the European grids package.

Strategic action 6: supporting the energy transition alongside the growth of sustainable aquaculture

Aquaculture is highly diverse in terms of production methods, species and operations, which lead to different needs, emission sources, challenges and opportunities. There are several specific challenges for aquaculture in that regard, which require action to progress on the energy transition.

First, emission sources are more diverse than in fisheries, and the relative share of energy costs in total production costs differs widely.

Second, the indirect emissions for feed are relatively important in the total footprint of fed-aquaculture, requiring specific solutions to increase efficiencies and develop feasible low-carbon alternatives.

The accompanying staff working document on aquaculture provides the detailed analysis and considerations underpinning the roadmap for aquaculture.

Member States are invited to:

- review and streamline permitting and licensing procedures, where necessary, to avoid unnecessary barriers to the uptake of renewable energy in aquaculture.
- integrate aquaculture energy needs into relevant planning processes, including maritime spatial planning (MSP) where applicable, and facilitate multi-use integrated systems with renewable energy;

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- develop, with relevant actors, national measures for the energy transition of the aquaculture sector as part of their multiannual strategic planning for aquaculture.

Phase II: scaling up (2031-2040)

In the second phase of the transition, efforts should step up on fostering the gradual deployment of proven low- and zero-emission technologies throughout the fishing fleet and aquaculture sector, building on the increased availability in energy-efficient and low-carbon solutions. Substantial effort will be needed in this phase of the transition to further develop the framework conditions for making the transition. Efforts should focus on creating appropriate financing conditions, scaling up infrastructure and industrial capacity and developing workforce skills. For fisheries in particular, fleet modernisation through a strengthened business model as set out in the Vision for 2040, will be a critical enabler for private investment in this phase of the transition.

Strategic action 7: establishing enabling market and financial conditions for the transition

Establishing the right market and financial conditions for the transition will be one of the key considerations in this phase of the transition. This includes finding innovative financing solutions for the transition, such as risk sharing measures, to be developed hand in hand with progress on the transition towards a stronger business model for the fisheries and aquaculture sector. The bridging of remaining price gaps between conventional and clean technologies is crucial in this part of the transition.

Strategic action 8: scaling up infrastructure and strengthening industrial capacity in the supply chain

Infrastructure development and increasingly available alternative fuels will enable the gradual introduction of vessels and aquaculture operations running on alternative fuels or clean electricity. For the international fleet, the availability of energy supply and related services will also depend on infrastructure development in ports located in third countries. Strengthening international cooperation and dialogue with partner countries will therefore be important to facilitate access to alternative fuels, onshore power supply, maintenance services, and compatible technical standards along key fishing routes and operational areas. For aquaculture, both infrastructure and access to sufficient grid capacity are crucial to support the increasing needs during the expected growth of the sector.

Strategic action 9: scaling-up skills development along with the transition

New technologies and ways of operating the fleet and aquaculture infrastructure which will be gradually adopted in this phase of the transition, require an adaptation of the way of working for all people working in and around the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. This includes fishers, aquaculture operators, port and bunkering operators, shipbuilders and mechanics. To advance skill development, Member States (their national, regional and coastal community-level competent authorities) in collaboration with educational and training institutes, can assess whether their current educational and vocational training programmes and curricula are fit for

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purpose in preparing the next generation for the sustainable energy transition in the sector. The EU competence framework for the Blue Economy BlueComp can support Member States in this process. The EU Pact for Skills provides an opportunity for stakeholders to join forces for the up and reskilling of workers in all industrial sectors while the forthcoming EU Strategy on Vocational Education and Training will aim to make vocational education and training (VET) more attractive, inclusive and responsive to labour market needs.

Completing the transition after 2040

As set out in the Vision, the fisheries and aquaculture sectors will have made substantial progress on the energy transition by 2040. However, to complete the energy transition, action will continue also after 2040, with the goal of completing the transition by 2050. Although uncertainties are high for this last phase of the transition, the sharpest acceleration of decarbonisation in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors is expected in the last decade of the transition, when technologies become more affordable and widely available and infrastructure is mature to support the transition[13].

Progress made until 2040 should be such that technological readiness supports wide-scale transition of the fleet and the aquaculture production to zero-emission and highly energy-efficient operations. In fisheries, this means that clean propulsion systems are becoming industry standards, and fossil fuels are phased out supported by mature infrastructure, supply chains and common technical standards. In the aquaculture sector, clean and adapted productions methods and feed, together with access to grid, become the norm. EU ports provide widespread, standardised access to renewable and low-carbon energy while policy focus shifts to the remaining hard-to-abate segments and securing a global level playing field.

[13] Study on greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reduction costs, scenarios and pathways for EU fisheries to achieve net zero by 2050, Publications Office of the European Union, 2026, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2771/3293497

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