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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

Accompanying the document

Recommendation for a

COUNCIL DECISION

authorising the opening of negotiations on behalf of the European Union on a new implementing protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement with the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, and possible amendments to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement or a new text of a Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement

{COM(2024) 295 final} - {SWD(2024) 177 final}

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

According to Article 31(10) of the CFP Basic Regulation¹, the European Commission shall arrange for independent ex-ante and ex-post evaluations for each implementing protocol to a SFPA, before it submits to the Council of the EU a recommendation to authorise the opening of negotiations for a successor protocol.

This Staff Working Document (SWD) makes an ex-ante and an ex-post evaluation covering the application of the current implementing Protocol (the implementing Protocol) of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement concluded between the EU and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe (the Agreement). These evaluations are primarily informed by an independent evaluation study conducted by an external consultant².

The ex-post evaluation covers most (up to December 2023) of the period of application of the current implementing Protocol, applying from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2024. It provides an overall assessment of the implementing Protocol, drawing conclusions in terms of its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, acceptance, EU added value of the intervention. The detailed evaluation questions corresponding to these evaluation criteria can be found in Annex III and further addressed in section 4.

The ex-ante evaluation analyses the relevant objectives for the Agreement and its implementing protocol, considering the current and future needs for this intervention. It considers the lessons learned from previous implementing protocols and the results of the ex-post evaluation of the current implementing Protocol. Finally, it considers and draws conclusions on the possible impacts from two main policy options: the negotiation or non-negotiation of a new implementing Protocol.

The ex-ante evaluation identifies as the preferred policy option the negotiation of a new implementing protocol for the Agreement, with some adjustments:

- Concerning the access and technical component, these adjustments would aim to ensure greater information sharing on the effective use of the fishing opportunities and dialogue on social conditions for seafarers.
- On the sectoral support component, adjustments should be sought to enable parties to effectively implement agreed priorities, in line with the National Development Policy of São Tomé et Príncipe.
- It should ensure continued cooperation on ocean governance, fisheries science, monitoring and control, the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

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

² <https://op.europa.eu/fr/publication-detail/-/publication/55fcd1d2-132e-11ef-a251-01aa75ed71a1>

- The implementation pace should be improved, through an improved planning and programme definition.