Council of the European Union

Brussels, 23 September 2025
(OR. en)

13145/25

Interinstitutional File:
2025/0287 (NLE)

PECHE 282

COVER NOTE

From:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director
date of receipt:	23 September 2025
To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
No. Cion doc.:	COM(2025) 511 final
Subject:	Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Government of the Cook Islands (2025-2032)

Delegations will find attached document COM(2025) 511 final.

Encl.: COM(2025) 511 final

EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 23.9.2025
COM(2025) 511 final

2025/0287 (NLE)

Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Government of the Cook Islands (2025-2032)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL

• Reasons for and objectives of the proposal

The Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA) between the European Union and the Government of the Cook Islands ('the Cook Islands') and was signed on 14 October 2016 and entered into force on 10 May 2017 for a period of eight years from the date of the start of its provisional application. The agreement is tacitly renewable for eight-year periods and is therefore still in force.

A Council Decision of 16 September 2024[1] authorised the Commission to conduct negotiations with the Cook Islands, on behalf of the European Union, on a new protocol implementing the SFPA based on a set of negotiating directives. Following these negotiations, a protocol was initialled by the negotiators on 20 June 2025. The new protocol covers a period of seven years from the date of provisional application set out in Article 13, i.e. the date it is signed by the parties.

The purpose of this proposal is for the Commission to obtain the Council's authorisation to conclude a new protocol in accordance with Article 218(6) and (7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

• Consistency with existing provisions in the policy area

The main aim of the new protocol to the SFPA is to provide an updated framework that takes account of the priorities of the common fisheries policy and the external dimension. This will help maintain and strengthen the strategic partnership between the European Union and the Cook Islands.

The new protocol grants fishing opportunities to EU vessels in fishing zones located in the waters of the Cook Islands in accordance with scientific advice and the recommendations of the relevant regional fisheries management organisations (WCPFC, SPRFMO, SIOFA). The new protocol provides for fishing opportunities for:

- 4 tuna purse seiners;

- 40 fishing days per year in the Cook Islands' fishing zone.

The protocol also aims to strengthen cooperation between the EU and the Cook Islands through the partnership established by the agreement in order to promote a sustainable fisheries policy and the responsible exploitation of fishery resources in the waters of the Cook Islands in the interest of both parties.

• Consistency with other EU policies

The negotiation of a new protocol to implement the SFPA with the Cook Islands is part of the EU's external action towards African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. It is also in line with its aims of promoting democratic principles and human rights.

[1] COUNCIL DECISION (EU) of 16 September 2024 authorising the opening of negotiations with the Government of the Cook Islands for a new implementing protocol to the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Government of the Cook Islands.

2. LEGAL BASIS, SUBSIDIARITY AND PROPORTIONALITY

• Legal basis

Given the main objectives and components of the Protocol, the legal basis is Article 43(2) TFEU on the common fisheries policy.

The Council is to adopt the decision concluding the agreement after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament. Given that Article 43(2) TFEU is the substantive legal basis, the European Parliament should give its consent. Therefore, the procedural legal basis of the decision concluding the agreement is Article 218(6), second subparagraph, point (a), TFEU.

The Commission is authorised to approve, on behalf of the Union, amendments to the Protocol adopted by the Joint Committee established under Article 6 and hence Article 218(7) TFEU is also included as legal basis.

• Subsidiarity (for non-exclusive competence)

The proposal falls within the EU's exclusive competence pursuant to Article 3(1)(d) TFEU. The subsidiarity principle therefore does not apply.

• Proportionality

The proposal is proportionate to the objective of establishing a legal, environmental, economic and social governance framework for fishing activities carried out by EU vessels in third-country waters set out in Article 31 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 establishing the common fisheries policy. It complies with those provisions and the provisions on financial support to third countries laid down in Article 32 of that Regulation.

Choice of the instrument

Article 218(6) TFEU provides that the Commission or the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy shall submit proposals to the Council, which shall adopt a decision on the conclusion of an international agreement. Given the subject matter of the envisaged agreement, it is appropriate for the Commission to submit a proposal to that effect.

3. RESULTS OF *EX POST* EVALUATIONS, STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

• *Ex post* evaluations / fitness checks of existing legislation

In May 2024 the Commission carried out an *ex post* evaluation of the current protocol to the EU-Cook Islands SFPA as well as an *ex ante* evaluation of a possible renewal of the protocol. The conclusions of the evaluation are set out in a separate staff working document[2].

The evaluation concluded that the EU fishing industry (tuna fisheries) has a firm interest in operating in the Cook Islands' fishing zone and that renewing the protocol is the preferred option by far. Non-renewal would deprive the EU of an instrument allowing it to respond both to the needs of various stakeholders and to its own needs in terms of strengthening global ocean governance in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean through the WCPFC multilateral framework.

[2] SWD(2024) 211 final.

For the Cook Islands, the EU intervention adds value by providing it with secure revenues over several years, an official platform for sectoral dialogue and cooperation with the EU and a framework for joint monitoring and control of EU activities. The SFPA will contribute to promoting responsible fishing and give it access to sectoral support for the implementation of its fisheries policy.

- **Stakeholder consultations**

EU Member States, industry representatives, international civil society organisations and the fisheries administration and representatives of civil society of the Cook Islands were consulted as part of the assessment.

- **Collection and use of expertise**

The Commission used an independent consultant for the *ex post* and *ex ante* evaluations in accordance with Article 31(10) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 establishing the common fisheries policy.

- **Impact assessment**

Not applicable.

- **Regulatory fitness and simplification**

Not applicable.

- **Fundamental rights**

The SFPA contains a clause on the consequences of violations of human rights and democratic principles.

4. BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

The annual financial contribution amounts to EUR 460 000, based on:

(a) an annual amount for access to fishery resources as provided for in the protocol, set at EUR 165 000 for the duration of the protocol;

(b) support for development of the Cook Islands' sectoral fisheries policy amounting to EUR 295 000 per year. This support meets the objectives of the Cook Islands' strategic plan for fisheries.

The annual amount for commitment and payment appropriations is established during the annual budgetary procedure, including for the reserve line for protocols not yet in force at the beginning of the year.

5. OTHER ELEMENTS

- **Implementation plans and monitoring, evaluation and reporting arrangements**

Monitoring arrangements are provided for in the SFPA and in the new protocol.

2025/0287 (NLE)

Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Government of the Cook Islands (2025-2032)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 43(2) in conjunction with Article 218(6)(a)(v) and (7) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Having regard to the consent of the European Parliament,

Whereas:

(1) In accordance with Council Decision [xxx of xx][1] the Protocol on the implementation ('the Protocol') to the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement ('Agreement') between the European Union, on the one part, and the Government of the Cook Islands, on the other part, was signed on […], subject to its conclusion at a later date.

(2) The objectives of the Protocol are to enable Union vessels to fish in the fishing zone of the Cook Islands and to enable the Union and the Cook Islands to work closely together to further promote the development of a sustainable fisheries policy and the responsible exploitation of fishery resources in the fishing zone of the Cook Islands. This cooperation will also contribute to decent working conditions in the fisheries sector.

(3) The Protocol should be approved on behalf of the Union.

(4) In accordance with the Treaties it is for the Commission to ensure that the notification to the Government of the Cook Islands provided for in Article 14 of the Protocol is made on behalf of the Union to express the Union's consent to be bound by the Protocol.

(5) Article 6 of the Agreement establishes a Joint Committee responsible for monitoring the application of the Agreement and the Protocol. That committee has the power to adopt certain amendments to the Protocol. To facilitate their approval, the Commission should be empowered, subject to substantive and procedural conditions, to approve them on behalf of the Union under a simplified procedure.

(6) The Union's position on proposed amendments to the Protocol should be established by the Council. Proposed amendments should be approved unless a blocking minority of Member States, in accordance with Article 16(4) of the Treaty on European Union, object to them.

(7) As the Agreement with the partner country extends over more than one financial year, the related budgetary commitments may be divided into annual instalments over the

[1] OJ…

period of the agreement's duration in line with Article 112(2) of Regulation 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council[2].

(8) The European Data Protection Supervisor was consulted in accordance with Article 42 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council[3] and delivered an opinion on […],

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Unionand the Government of the Cook Islands ('the Protocol') is hereby approved on behalf of the Union.

The text of the Protocol is attached to this Decision as Annex.

Article 2

In accordance with the provisions and conditions laid down in Annex 2 to this Decision, the Commission is authorised to approve, on behalf of the Union, amendments to the Protocol adopted by the Joint Committee established under Article 6 of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Unionand the Government of the Cook Islands.

Article 3

This Decision shall enter into force on the seventh day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council
The President

[2] Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj).

[3] Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/1725/oj).

LEGISLATIVE FINANCIAL AND DIGITAL STATEMENT

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1. FRAMEWORK OF THE PROPOSAL/INITIATIVE

1.1. Title of the proposal/initiative

Proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion of the protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Government of the Cook Islands and the European Union (2025-2032).

1.2. Policy area(s) concerned

08 – Agriculture and maritime policy

08.05 – Sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs) and regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs)

08.05.01 – Establishing a governance framework for fishing activities carried out by Union fishing vessels in third-country waters

1.3. Objective(s)

1.3.1. General objective(s)

The negotiation and conclusion of sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs) with third countries meet the general objective of giving EU fishing vessels access to the fishing zones of third countries and developing a partnership with those countries with a view to strengthening the sustainable exploitation of fishery resources in non-EU waters.

SFPAs also ensure consistency between the principles governing the common fisheries policy and other EU policy objectives such as the sustainable use of third-country resources, combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, better political and financial governance of fisheries, integrating partner countries into the global economy and contributing to sustainable development generally.

1.3.2. Specific objective(s)

Specific objective No 1

To contribute to sustainable fishing in non-EU waters, maintain a European presence in distant-water fisheries and protect the interests of the EU fisheries sector and consumers by negotiating and concluding SFPAs with coastal states in line with other EU policies.

1.3.3. Expected result(s) and impact

Specify the effects which the proposal/initiative should have on the beneficiaries/groups targeted.

Conclusion of an implementing protocol will allow the strategic fisheries partnership between the EU and the Cook Islands to be continued and strengthened and create fishing opportunities for EU vessels in the Cook Islands' fishing zone.

The protocol will also contribute to better management and conservation of fishery resources through financial support (sectoral support) for the implementation of the partner country's national programmes, in particular as regards its global plan for fisheries, monitoring and combating illegal fishing and supporting the small-scale fishing sector.

Finally, the protocol will contribute to the sustainable exploitation of marine resources in the Cook Islands and to the country's fisheries economy by promoting

growth linked to fisheries-related economic activities and ensuring decent working conditions.

1.3.4. Indicators of performance

Specify the indicators for monitoring progress and achievements.

Utilisation rate of fishing opportunities (annual percentage of fishing authorisations used in relation those available under the protocol).

Catch data (collection and analysis) and commercial value of the agreement.

Creation of added value in the EU and stabilisation of the EU market (aggregated with other SFPAs).

Contribution to better research and monitoring and control of fishing activities in the partner country and to the development of its fisheries sector, in particular small-scale fisheries.

1.4. The proposal/initiative relates to

☒ a new action

☐ a new action following a pilot project / preparatory action[6]

☐ the extension of an existing action

☐ a merger or redirection of one or more actions towards another/a new action

1.5. Grounds for the proposal/initiative

1.5.1. Requirement(s) to be met in the short or long term including a detailed timeline for roll-out of the implementation of the initiative

It is intended that the new implementing protocol will apply provisionally from the date on which it is signed to minimise any interruption of fishing operations when the current protocol expires.

The new protocol will regulate the fishing activities of the EU fleet in the Cook Islands' fishing zone and allow owners of EU vessels to apply for authorisations to fish in that zone. It will also strengthen cooperation between the EU and the Cook Islands to promote the development of a sustainable fisheries policy generally. The protocol provides, in particular, for vessels to be monitored via VMS and for the electronic transmission of catch data. The sectoral support available under the protocol will help the Cook Islands implement its national fisheries strategy, including fighting IUU fishing, while promoting decent working conditions in the fisheries. The protocol will apply for seven years from the date it is signed.

1.5.2. Added value of EU involvement (it may result from different factors, e.g. coordination gains, legal certainty, greater effectiveness or complementarities). For the purposes of this section 'added value of EU involvement' is the value resulting from EU action that is additional to the value that would have been otherwise created by Member States alone.

Failure by the EU to agree on a new protocol would preclude fishing by EU vessels as the current agreement contains a clause excluding fishing activity not taking place under a protocol to the agreement. The added value for the EU's long-distance fleet

[6] As referred to in Article 58(2) point (a) or (b) of the Financial Regulation.

is therefore very clear. The protocol also provides a framework for strengthened cooperation between the EU and the Cook Islands.

1.5.3. Lessons learned from similar experiences in the past

Analysis of historical catches in the Cook Islands' fishing zone and available scientific assessments and advice led the parties to set fishing opportunities for four tuna purse seiners for 40 fishing days per year in the Cook Islands' fishing area. Sectoral support is important to take account of the priorities of the national strategy for fisheries and the exploitation of natural resources.

1.5.4. Compatibility with the multiannual financial framework and possible synergies with other appropriate instruments

The funds allocated as financial compensation for access to the fishing zone constitute fungible revenue in the Cook Islands' national budget. However, funds earmarked for sectoral support are allocated (generally by inclusion in the country's annual budget law) to the ministry responsible for fisheries as a condition for the conclusion of an SFPA and for its monitoring. These financial resources are compatible with other sources of funding from other providers of international funding for projects and/or programmes to be carried out nationally in the Cook Islands' fisheries sector.

1.5.5. Assessment of the different available financing options, including scope for redeployment

Not applicable

1.6. Duration of the proposal/initiative and of its financial impact

☒ **limited duration**

– ☒ in force for a period of seven years from the date of signature (expected 2025 to 2032)

– ☒ financial impact of seven years from the date of signature for commitment appropriations and seven years and six months from the date of signature for payment appropriations (expected 2025 to 2032).

☐ **unlimited duration**

– implementation with a start-up period from YYYY to YYYY,

– followed by full-scale operation.

1.7. Method(s) of budget implementation planned

☒ **Direct management** by the Commission

– ☒ by its departments, including by staff in EU delegations;

– ☐ by the executive agencies

☐ **Shared management** with the Member States

☐ **Indirect management** by entrusting budget implementation tasks to:

– ☐ third countries or bodies they have designated

– ☐ international organisations and their agencies (to be specified)

– ☐ the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund

– ☐ bodies referred to in Articles 70 and 71 of the Financial Regulation

– ☐ public law bodies

– ☐ bodies governed by private law with a public service mission to the extent that they are provided with adequate financial guarantees

– ☐ bodies governed by the private law of a Member State that are entrusted with the implementation of a public-private partnership and that are provided with adequate financial guarantees

– ☐ bodies or persons entrusted with the implementation of specific actions in the common foreign and security policy pursuant to Title V of the Treaty on European Union, and identified in the relevant basic act

– ☐ bodies established in a Member State, governed by the private law of a Member State or EU law and eligible to be entrusted, in accordance with sector-specific rules, with the implementation of EU funds or budgetary guarantees, to the extent that such bodies are controlled by public law bodies or by bodies governed by private law with a public service mission, and are provided with adequate financial guarantees in the form of joint and several liability by the controlling bodies or equivalent financial guarantees and which may be, for each action, limited to the maximum amount of the EU support.

2. MANAGEMENT MEASURES

2.1. Monitoring and reporting rules

The Commission (DG MARE, in collaboration with its Fisheries Attaché responsible for the Cook Islands and in coordination with the relevant Commission departments) will ensure regular monitoring of the protocol's implementation with respect to the use of fishing opportunities by operators, catch data and compliance with the conditions for sectoral support.

In addition, the SFPA provides for at least one annual meeting of the Joint Committee during which the Commission and the Cook Islands will review the implementation of the agreement and its protocol and make any necessary adjustments to programming and, where appropriate, to the financial contribution.

2.2. Management and control system(s)

2.2.1. Justification of the budget implementation method(s), the funding implementation mechanism(s), the payment modalities and the control strategy proposed

Payments are made separately for the access contribution and the sectoral support contribution.

Payments relating to access are made each year on the protocol's anniversary date, except in the first year, when payment is made within three months of the start of provisional application. Vessel access is controlled by issuing fishing authorisations.

The first payment will be made within 45 days of the Joint Committee adopting the multiannual implementation programme; for subsequent years, payment will be subject to the results achieved. The results achieved and the rate of implementation will be monitored in accordance with the implementing rules for sectoral support funds on the basis of reports or documentary evidence provided by the partner country and evaluations and verifications carried out by the Fisheries Attaché.

2.2.2. Information concerning the risks identified and the internal control system(s) set up to mitigate them

The identified risks are under-utilisation of fishing opportunities by EU shipowners and under-utilisation or delays by the Cook Islands in the use of funds to support its sectoral fisheries policy. Extensive dialogue is planned on the design and implementation of sectoral policy under the agreement and protocol. The joint monitoring of results referred to in Article 7 of the protocol is another means of control. Also, both the agreement and the protocol contain specific clauses allowing them to be suspended on certain conditions and under specific circumstances.

2.2.3. Estimation and justification of the cost-effectiveness of the controls (ratio between the control costs and the value of the related funds managed), and assessment of the expected levels of risk of error (at payment and at closure)

Access and sectoral support payments under SFPAs are subject to checks to ensure they comply with international agreements and are correctly implemented. Monitoring is carried out by Commission staff in EU delegations and at meetings of the Joint Committee. A multiannual programming matrix is used to assess progress. If progress is insufficient, payment of the next instalment is suspended or reduced. The overall cost of checks on SFPAs has been estimated to around 1.8% (of all contributions in 2018). SFPA control procedures are largely based on basic regulatory requirements. Checks are considered to be effective if no shortcomings

are detected that are likely to have a significant impact on the legality and regularity of financial transactions.

2.3. Measures to prevent fraud and irregularities

The Commission will set up a political dialogue and regular consultations with the Cook Islands to optimise how the agreement and protocol are managed and to boost the EU's contribution to sustainable resource management. Any payment made by the Commission under an SFPA is subject to the Commission's normal budgetary and financial rules and procedures. In particular, the bank accounts of third countries to which financial contributions are paid must be clearly identified. Article 2 of the protocol stipulates that the financial contribution for access and for developing the sector must be paid into a nominated Cook Islands Government bank account. Provisions on the recovery of unduly paid sectoral support funds are set out in Appendix 3.

3. ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL/INITIATIVE

3.1. Heading(s) of the multiannual financial framework and expenditure budget line(s) affected

- Existing budget lines

In the order of multiannual financial framework headings and budget lines.

Heading of multiannual financial framework	Budget line	Type of expenditure	Contribution			
	Number	Diff./non-diff[7].	from EFTA co untries[8]	from candidate countries[9]	from third countries	within the meaning of Article 21(2)(b) of the Financial Regulation
Establishing a governance framework for fishing activities carried out by EU fishing vessels in third-country waters	08.05.01	Diff.	NO	NO	NO	NO

- New budget lines requested

In the order of multiannual financial framework headings and budget lines.

Heading of multiannual financial framework	Budget line	Type of expenditure	Contribution			
	Number	Diff./non-diff.	from EFTA co untries	from candidate countries	from third countries	within the meaning of Article 21(2)(b) of the Financial Regulation
	[XX.YY.YY.YY]		YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO

7 Diff. = Differentiated appropriations / Non-diff. = Non-differentiated appropriations.

8 EFTA: European Free Trade Association.

9 Candidate countries and, where applicable, potential candidates from the Western Balkans.

3.2. Estimated financial impact of the proposal on appropriations

3.2.1. Summary of estimated impact on operational appropriations

– ☐ The proposal/initiative does not require the use of operational appropriations

– ☒ The proposal/initiative requires the use of operational appropriations, as explained below

3.2.1.1. Appropriations from voted budget

EUR million (to three decimal places)

Heading of multiannual financial framework	Number 3	Natural resources and environment

DG MARE			Year **2025**	Year **2026**	Year **2027**	Year **2028**	Year **2029**	Year **2030**	Year **2031**	Year **2032**	**TOTAL**
○ Operational appropriations											
Budget line[10] 08.05.01	Commitments	(1a)	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460		**3.220**
	Payments	(2a)	0.165	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.295	**3.220**
Appropriations of an administrative nature financed from the envelope for specific programmes[11]											
TOTAL appropriations for DG MARE	Commitments	=1a+1b +3	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460		**3.220**
	Payments	=2a+2b +3	0.165	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.295	**3.220**

○ TOTAL operational appropriations	Commitments	(4)	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460		**3.220**
	Payments	(5)	0.165	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.295	**3.220**
○TOTAL appropriations of an administrative nature		(6)									

[10] According to the official budget nomenclature.

[11] Technical and/or administrative assistance and expenditure in support of the implementation of EU programmes and/or actions (former 'BA' lines), indirect research, direct research.

financed from the envelope for specific programmes											
TOTAL appropriations under HEADING 3 of the multiannual financial framework	Commitments	=4+6	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460		**3.220**
	Payments	=5+6	0.165	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.295	**3.220**

Heading of multiannual financial framework	**7**	'Administrative expenditure'				
DG: <……>		Year **2024**	Year **2025**	Year **2026**	Year **2027**	**TOTAL MFF 2021-2027**
• Human resources		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	**0.000**
• Other administrative expenditure		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	**0.000**
TOTAL DG <……>	Appropriations	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**

DG: <……>		Year **2024**	Year **2025**	Year **2026**	Year **2027**	**TOTAL MFF 2021-2027**
• Human resources		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	**0.000**
• Other administrative expenditure		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	**0.000**
TOTAL DG <……>	Appropriations	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**

TOTAL appropriations under HEADING 7 of the multiannual financial framework	(Total commitments = Total payments)	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**

EUR million (to three decimal places)

	Year **2025**	Year **2026**	Year **2027**	Year **2028**	Year **2029**	Year **2030**	Year **2031**	Year **2032**	**TOTAL MFF 2025-2032**

TOTAL appropriations under HEADINGS 3 to 7	Commitments	**0.460**	**0.460**	**0.460**	**0.460**	**0.460**	**0.460**	**0.460**		**3.220**
of the multiannual financial framework	Payments	**0.165**	**0.460**	**0.460**	**0.460**	**0.460**	**0.460**	**0.460**	**0.295**	**3.220**

3.2.2. Estimated output funded from operational appropriations (not to be completed for decentralised agencies)

Commitment appropriations in EUR million (to three decimal places)

Indicate objectives and outputs ⇩			Year **2025**		Year **2026**		Year **2027**		Year **2028**		**Year 2029**		**Year 2030**		**Year 2031**		**Year 2032**		**TOTAL**	
	OUTPUTS																			
	Type[12]	Average cost	Number	Cost	Number	Cost	Number	Cost	Number	Cost	Number	Cost	Number	Cost	Number	Cost	Number	Cost	Number	Cost	Total number	Total cost
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE No 1[13]…																				
- Access		0.165		0.165		0.165		0.165		0.165		0.165		0.165		0.165				1.155
- Sectoral		0.295				0.295		0.295		0.295		0.295		0.295		0.295		0.295		2.065
- Output																				
Subtotal for specific objective No 1																				
TOTALS				**0.165**		**0.460**		**0.460**		**0.460**		**0.460**		**0.460**		**0.460**		**0.295**		**3.220**

12 Outputs are products and services to be supplied (e.g. number of student exchanges financed, number of km of roads built).

13 As described in point 1.4.2 'Specific objective(s) …'.

3.2.3. Summary of estimated impact on administrative appropriations

– ☒ The proposal/initiative does not require the use of appropriations of an administrative nature

– ☐ The proposal/initiative requires the use of appropriations of an administrative nature, as explained below

The appropriations required for human resources and other expenditure of an administrative nature will be met by appropriations from the DG that are already assigned to management of the action and/or have been redeployed within the DG, together, if necessary, with any additional allocation which may be granted to the managing DG under the annual allocation procedure and in the light of budgetary constraints.

3.2.4. Estimated requirements of human resources

– ☒ The proposal/initiative does not require the use of human resources

– ☐ The proposal/initiative requires the use of human resources, as explained below

The human resources required will be covered by staff from the DG who are already assigned to management of the action and/or have been redeployed within the DG, together if necessary with any additional allocation which may be granted to the managing DG under the annual allocation procedure and in the light of budgetary constraints.

3.2.5. Overview of estimated impact on digital technology-related investments

The digital solutions used in the implementation of the protocol already exist and are already being implemented for the previous protocol and other fisheries agreements, as well as for the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 and Regulation (EU) 2403/2017. Investments to maintain and improve the functionality of these digital tools are not specific to this protocol.

3.2.6. Compatibility with the current multiannual financial framework

The proposal/initiative:

– ☒ can be fully financed through redeployment within the relevant heading of the multiannual financial framework (MFF)

The proposal/initiative is compatible the current multiannual financial framework. Provision is made for using reserve line 30.020200 for the amounts mentioned in paragraph 3.2.5.

– ☐ requires use of the unallocated margin under the relevant heading of the MFF and/or use of the special instruments as defined in the MFF Regulation

– ☐ requires revision of the MFF

3.2.7. Third-party contributions

The proposal/initiative:

– ☒ does not provide for co-financing by third parties

– ☐ provides for the co-financing by third parties estimated below:

Appropriations in EUR million (to three decimal places)

	Year	Year	Year	Year	Total

Specify the co-financing body					
TOTAL appropriations co-financed					

3.3. Estimated impact on revenue

– ☒ The proposal/initiative has no financial impact on revenue.

– ☐ The proposal/initiative has the following financial impact:

– – ☐ on own resources

– – ☐ on other revenue

– – ☐ please indicate, if the revenue is assigned to expenditure lines

EUR million (to three decimal places)

Budget revenue line:	Appropriations available for the current financial year	Impact of the proposal/initiative[14]			
		Year **2024**	Year **2025**	Year **2026**	Year **2027**
Article ……					

For assigned revenue, specify the budget expenditure line(s) affected.

Other remarks (e.g. method/formula used for calculating the impact on revenue or any other information).

4. DIGITAL ASPECTS

4.1. Requirements of digital relevance

Reporting requirement	Description	Use of digital technology
Vessel position data (Annex Chapter III and Appendix 5)	The vessel must be equipped with a vessel monitoring device transmitting data identifying the vessel and its position, direction and speed at regular intervals (VMS data).	yes, via VMS
Electronic fishing logbooks (Annex Chapter III and Appendix 2)	The master must record catch data daily in an electronic fishing logbook integrated into an electronic recording and reporting system (ERS).	yes, via ERS
Requests for authorisation of vessels (Annex to the protocol,	A database of authorisations is used to apply for fishing authorisation from	yes, via LICENCE

[14] As regards traditional own resources (customs duties, sugar levies), the amounts indicated must be net amounts, i.e. gross amounts after deduction of 20% for collection costs.

Chapter II)	the partner country.	
Daily data transmission (Annex to the protocol, Chapter III)	Electronic logbook data must be transmitted automatically on a daily basis to the Fisheries Monitoring Centre of the flag State.	yes, via ERS
Entries into and exits from the fishing zone, prior notifications and landing and transhipment declarations (Annex Chapter III and Appendix 2)	Recording and transmission of each entry into and exit from the fishing zone via the ERS or other electronic means of communication.	yes, via ERS
Quarterly aggregated data	The flag State must provide the Commission with aggregated quantities of catches and discards on a quarterly basis.	Not specified in the bilateral agreement but the data is provided in a digital database (effort and catch reporting, ECR)
Data protection (Article 8 and Appendix 4)	Data on fishing activities must be treated in a confidential and secure manner.	Yes, requires secure software systems

4.2. Data

The key reporting requirements are based on digital technology, in particular the vessel monitoring system (VMS), which transmits a vessel's identification and positions, and the electronic logbook (ERS), which automatically transmits a vessel's identified, localised and quantified catch data on a daily basis.

The quarterly and annual aggregated catch reports use data from the flag Member States that is fed into an implicit numerical database for data aggregation (ECR database).

Data protection and privacy:

• The agreement ensures the protection of personal data. Fishing activity data shared under the above measures must be processed safely in compliance with GDPR requirements and the European data strategy's objective of creating a secure and competitive digital economy.

Data sharing and transparency:

• The agreement encourages data sharing between the Cook Islands and the EU to promote the transparency and accountability of fishing activities. This reflects the European data strategy's objective of improving access to and the use of data to improve decision-making and resource management.

Consideration of the 'only once' principle

• The 'only once' principle is not explicitly mentioned, but operators are required to provide information to the public authorities only once. It is the responsibility the flag State to enter data collected from vessels in the VMS and ERS databases; the data can then be used to meet the reporting requirements of different authorities. The purpose of this is to avoid duplication of work and reduce the administrative burden.

FAIR principle: findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable

Easy to find:

• The use of electronic reporting systems ensures that the data is systematically catalogued, archived and searchable and therefore easy to find in line with the FAIR principle.

Accessibility:

• Data must be accessible to authorised entities through secure digital platforms, allowing real-time sharing and removing unnecessary barriers so that information can be accessed by those who need it.

Interoperability:

• Use of the UN/FLUX data exchange format, which allows different systems to share and use data smoothly, improves interoperability in line with the FAIR principle.

Reusability:

• High standards of data quality and secure data management will provide high-quality data that meets international standards and can be used for different purposes such as scientific research, policy development and fisheries management.

To sum up, the bilateral agreement is consistent with the European data strategy by virtue of its data protection and data sharing requirements and the use of digital systems. The data submission requirements meet the 'only once' principle and the data can be used for a wide range of purposes in line with the FAIR principle.

4.3. Digital solutions

The main digital solutions provided for are VMS, ERS, LICENCE and ECR. These are existing digital fisheries control applications put in place by the Commission and used by the flag Member States.

• The data referred to in point 4.1 is usually exchanged between a vessel (EU operator) and its flag State, and then between the EU and the partner country (mainly between fisheries monitoring centres, which are State control bodies) through these digital applications.

• Aggregated data is extracted from operators' declarations to the flag Member State, which reprocesses it and feeds it into a Commission database (effort and catch reporting, ECR).

• Applications for fishing authorisations sent by the Commission to the partner country use data from a fleet database (EU fishing register) and a LICENCE database.

What measures are in place to protect digitally transmitted data?

The protocol requires secure and confidential treatment of data (Article 8 and Appendix 4).

Is there a plan to address failures in digital systems?

Provision is made for alternative communication methods to ensure uninterrupted reporting in the event of a system failure (Annex, Chapter 4).

4.4. Interoperability assessment

Interoperability is ensured through use of the UN/FLUX format for data exchange, which allows different systems to share and use data smoothly.

4.5. Measures to support digital implementation

Implementation support is provided by the Commission.