Council of the European Union

Brussels, 23 September 2025
(OR. en)

13147/25

Interinstitutional File:
2025/0288 (NLE)

PECHE 283

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) 512 final
Subject:	Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on the signing, on behalf of the Union, and provisional application 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) 512 final.

Encl.: COM(2025) 512 final

EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 23.9.2025
COM(2025) 512 final

2025/0288 (NLE)

Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on the signing, on behalf of the Union, and provisional application 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 aim of the proposal is to authorise the signature of the implementation protocol.

• Consistency with existing provisions in the policy area

The main objective of the new protocol to the SFPA is to provide an updated framework, taking into account the priorities of the reformed common fisheries policy and its external dimension, with a view to pursuing and strengthening the strategic partnership between the European Union and the Government of the Cook Islands in the fisheries sector.

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

The legal basis is Article 43(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which establishes the Common Fisheries Policy, and Article 218(5), which concerns the signing of agreements between the Union and third countries and the possibility to apply these agreements on a provisional 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.

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.

[2] SWD(2024) 211 final.

- **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.

2025/0288 (NLE)

Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on the signing, on behalf of the Union, and provisional application 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(5) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

(1) On 16 September 2024, the Council authorised the Commission to open negotiations with the Government of the Cook Islands for a new implementing Protocol tothe Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the the European Union and the Government of the Cook Islands .

(2) The negotiations were successfully concluded by the initialling of the Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the the European Union and the Government of the Cook Islands ('the Protocol') on 20 June 2025.

(3) The objective of the Protocol is to enable Union vessels to fish in the Cook Islands' fishing zone and to enable the Union and the Government of the Cook Islands to work more closely together to develop a sustainable fisheries policy, to promote responsible exploitation of fisheries resources in Cook Islands' fishing zone and in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, and to contribute to the creation of decent working conditions in the fishing industry.

(4) Therefore, the Protocol should be signed on behalf of the Union, subject to its conclusion at a later date.

(5) In view of the economic importance of Union fishing activities in the Cook Islands' fishing zone and the need to minimise the time during which such activities are interrupted, this Protocol should apply provisionally as soon as it is signed, pending its entry into force, in accordance with its Article 13.

(6) As the agreement with the partner country covers more than one financial year, the related budgetary commitments may be broken down into annual instalments for the duration of the agreement, in line with Art 112(2) of Regulation 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council[3].

[3] 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).

(7) In accordance with the Treaties, it is for the Commission to ensure the signature of the Agreement subject to its conclusion at a later date.

(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[4] and delivered an opinion on [date],

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The signing 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) ('the Protocol') is hereby approved on behalf of the Union, subject to the conclusion of the said Protocol.The text of the Protocol to be signed is attached to this Decision.

Article 2

The Protocol shall be applied provisionally, in accordance with Article 13 of the Protocol, as from the date of its signature, pending its entry into force.

Article 3

This Decision shall enter into force on the day of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council
The President

[4] 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

1. FRAMEWORK OF THE PROPOSAL/INITIATIVE 3
1.1. Title of the proposal/initiative 3
1.2. Policy area(s) concerned 3
1.3. Objective(s) 3
1.3.1. General objective(s) 3
1.3.2. Specific objective(s) 3
1.3.3. Expected result(s) and impact 3
1.3.4. Indicators of performance 3
1.4. The proposal/initiative relates to: 4
1.5. Grounds for the proposal/initiative 4
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 4
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. 4
1.5.3. Lessons learned from similar experiences in the past 4
1.5.4. Compatibility with the multiannual financial framework and possible synergies with other appropriate instruments 5
1.5.5. Assessment of the different available financing options, including scope for redeployment 5
1.6. Duration of the proposal/initiative and of its financial impact 6
1.7. Method(s) of budget implementation planned 6
2. MANAGEMENT MEASURES 8
2.1. Monitoring and reporting rules 8
2.2. Management and control system(s) 8
2.2.1. Justification of the budget implementation method(s), the funding implementation mechanism(s), the payment modalities and the control strategy proposed 8
2.2.2. Information concerning the risks identified and the internal control system(s) set up to mitigate them 8
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 & at closure) 8
2.3. Measures to prevent fraud and irregularities 9
3. ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL/INITIATIVE 10

3.1. Heading(s) of the multiannual financial framework and expenditure budget line(s) affected 10
3.2. Estimated financial impact of the proposal on appropriations 12
3.2.1. Summary of estimated impact on operational appropriations 12
3.2.1.1. Appropriations from voted budget 12
3.2.1.2. Appropriations from external assigned revenues 17
3.2.2. Estimated output funded from operational appropriations 22
3.2.3. Summary of estimated impact on administrative appropriations 24
3.2.3.1. Appropriations from voted budget 24
3.2.3.2. Appropriations from external assigned revenues 24
3.2.3.3. Total appropriations 24
3.2.4. Estimated requirements of human resources 25
3.2.4.1. Financed from voted budget 25
3.2.4.2. Financed from external assigned revenues 26
3.2.4.3. Total requirements of human resources 26
3.2.5. Overview of estimated impact on digital technology-related investments 28
3.2.6. Compatibility with the current multiannual financial framework 28
3.2.7. Third-party contributions 28
3.3. Estimated impact on revenue 29
4. DIGITAL ASPECTS 29
4.1. Requirements of digital relevance 30
4.2. Data 30
4.3. Digital solutions 31
4.4. Interoperability assessment 31
4.5. Measures to support digital implementation 32

1. FRAMEWORK OF THE PROPOSAL/INITIATIVE

1.1. Title of the proposal/initiative

Proposal for a Council decision on the signing, on behalf of the Union, and provisional application 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 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.

The conclusion of the implementation Protocol allows the strategic partnership in the field of fisheries between the European Union and the Cook Islands to be continued and strengthened. The conclusion of the Protocol will create fishing opportunities for Union vessels in the Cook Islands fishing zone.

The Protocol will also contribute to better management and conservation of fisheries resources, through financial support (sectoral support) for the implementation of programmes adopted at national level by the partner country, in particular the global plan for fisheries, the monitoring of and fight against illegal fishing, and support for the small-scale fishing sector.

Finally, the Protocol will contribute to the sustainable exploitation by the Cook Islands of its marine resources, as well as to the Cook Islands' fisheries economy, by promoting growth linked to fisheries-related economic activities.

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[5]

☐ 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

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

under a protocol to the agreement. The added value for the EU's long-distance fleet 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.

1.6. 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 2025to 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 its staff in the Union delegations;

– ☐ by the executive agencies

☐ **Shared management** with the Member States

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

– ☐ third countries or the 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 Union law and eligible to be entrusted, in accordance with sector-specific rules, with the implementation of Union 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 Union 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 & 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 order of multiannual financial framework headings and budget lines.

Heading of multiannual financial framework	Budget line	Type of expenditure	Contribution			
	Number	Diff./Non-diff[6].	from EFTA countries[7]	from candidate countries and potential candidates[8]	From other third countries	other assigned revenue
Establishing a governance framework for fishing activities carried out by European Union fishing vessels in third country waters (SFPA)	08.05.01	Diff.	NO	NO	NO	NO

- New budget lines requested

In 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 countries	from candidate countries and potential candidates	from other third countries	other assigned revenue

6 Diff. = Differentiated appropriations / Non-diff. = Non-differentiated appropriations.
7 EFTA: European Free Trade Association.
8 Candidate countries and, where applicable, potential candidates from the Western Balkans.

	[XX.YY.YY.YY]	Diff./Non-diff.	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO

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 MFF 2025-2032**
Operational appropriations											
Budget line 08.05.01	Commitments	(1)	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460		**3.220**
	Payments	(2)	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 of specific programmes											
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**

			Year 2025	Year 2026	Year 2027	Year 2028	Year 2029	Year 2030	Year 2031	Year 2032	**TOTAL**
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 financed from the envelope for specific programmes (6)											
TOTAL appropriations	Commitments	=4+6	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460	0.460		**3.220**

under HEADING 3	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	Year	Year	Year	**TOTAL**	
• 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	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	**TOTAL MFF 2025-2032**
		2025	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**	**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[9]	Average 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[10]…																				
- 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**

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

10 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.

Description of tasks to be carried out by:

Officials and temporary staff	
External staff	

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[11]			
		Year	Year	Year	Year
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	The master must record catch data	yes, via ERS

[11] 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.

(Annex Chapter III and Appendix 2)	daily in an electronic fishing logbook integrated into an electronic recording and reporting system (ERS).	
Requests for authorisation of vessels (Annex to the protocol, Chapter II)	A database of authorisations is used to apply for fishing authorisation from the partner country.	yes, via LICENCE
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.