



## THE ADVISORY COUNCILS



### TUTORIAL 3

The place to be to provide a real and concrete input to European and National policies, with the support of LIFE !

The 2002 CFP identified the “broad involvement of stakeholders at all stages of the policy from conception to implementation” as a basic principle of good governance. This **stakeholder involvement** was formalised through the Advisory Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture (ACFA) and the establishment of Regional Advisory Councils (RACs).

Advisory Council memberships are composed on the one hand of **fishing industry sector representatives** covering the entire value chain and taking up 60% of the overall seats, with the remaining 40% around the table being representatives of “**other interest groups**” including NGOs, consumers, tourism operators and those with an interest in marine and coastal issues.

The overall role of the Advisory Councils is to provide the Commission and EU Member State governments **with recommendations** on fisheries management and related matters.

The Reform of the CFP in 2012 identified centralised and inflexible decision making as major shortcomings of previous CFPs, with a focus on short term considerations at the expense **of longer term economic, environmental and social sustainability**. The CFP reform therefore closed down the ACFA and enhanced the role of RACs, transforming them into “Advisory Councils” (ACs) albeit still operating on a regional basis via the Baltic Sea AC, Mediterranean AC, North Sea AC, North-western Waters AC, the South-western Waters AC and a Black Sea AC (in the process of being set up).

These ‘stakeholder involvement in decision making’ processes are intended to facilitate a **sea-basin led approach** taking into account the diverse conditions at local, national and regional level through the regional ACs. The establishment of an additional five ‘non-regional’ Advisory Councils aims to provide enhanced stakeholder involvement in key areas of CFP implementation covering Distant Water fisheries, Pelagic Fisheries, Outermost Regions, Aquaculture, and Markets.

Among the duties of ACs, in the context of **regionalisation**, is contributing to the development of the landing obligation and discard plans, Multi-species Multi-Annual Plans (MAPs) for different sea basins and geographic localities and the Technical Measures Regulation.

## What is the role of LIFE and what can LIFE do for you?

Previously, the industry seats at the tables where decisions are made have been dominated by representatives of the **large-scale sector**, influencing the development and implementation of laws that regulate stocks, fishing opportunities and jobs.

Today, things are different. Thanks to the reformed CFP and the presence and support of LIFE, **small-scale fishers can and must be at the table too**. Seats allocated to the industry in the Advisory Councils have been reserved specifically for the small-scale sector. It is now required by law that small scale fishers have dedicated and specific representation in the ACs. So as a small-scale fisher, **you have the opportunity to make your voice heard and ensure that unlike in the past, the recommendations stemming from the Advisory Councils, that directly influence EU law and therefore your livelihood, will benefit all sectors**.

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Advisory Councils are the place to be to provide a **real and concrete input** to European and National policies. On LIFE's side, **we can support your organisation to succeed in this vital task** by:

- ✓ Advising you on how to prepare your application to become a member of the relevant Advisory Council.
- ✓ Supporting financial costs including those for membership fees, preparatory meetings, etc.
- ✓ Providing you with training, briefings and translations
- ✓ Organizing pre-AC consultations as necessary.

At LIFE, **we are here to empower small scale fishers like you**, enabling you to engage in decision making processes where **you can make all the difference**.

**Join LIFE, make your voice heard!**

