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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

**to the Protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union
and Guinea-Bissau**

Accompanying the document

Recommendation for a Council Decision

**authorising the opening of the negotiations on behalf of the European Union for the
conclusion of an Implementing Protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement
between the European Union and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau**

{COM(2024) 10 final} - {SWD(2024) 5 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 (hereinafter, the implementing Protocol) of the Fisheries Partnership concluded between the EU and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau Agreement (hereinafter, the Agreement). These evaluations are primarily informed by an independent evaluation study conducted by an external consultant².

The ex-post evaluation covers most of the period of application of the current implementing Protocol of the Agreement, starting from the June 2019 to June 2023. It provides an overall assessment of the implementing Protocol and demonstrates that the Protocol has generally succeeded in achieving its main objectives, including: providing fishing opportunities for Union fishing vessels in important fishing areas; establishing a legal framework for fishing operations guided by principles on the economic, financial, technical, and scientific cooperation in the fisheries sector with a view to ensure the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources; and empowering Guinea-Bissau through capacity building, and ensured compliance with regulations, safeguarding the interests of both the EU and Guinea-Bissau.

The ex-post also identified some areas for improvement stemming from the main challenges encountered on the implementation of the current implementing Protocol, including: the failure to transition from a fisheries management system based on fishing capacity to catch limits; the under-utilisation of certain fishing opportunities; delays in the used of sectoral support funds by Guinea-Bissau; and a lack of communication and visibility on the benefits of the Protocol.

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 the following three policy options:

- A renegotiation of the current implementing Protocol for the Agreement;
- A negotiation of an improved implementing protocol for the Agreement;

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

² [Étude d'évaluation rétrospective et prospective du protocole à l'accord de partenariat dans le secteur de la pêche entre l'Union européenne et la Guinée-Bissau \(2023\)](#)

- No negotiation of an implementing protocol for the Agreement.

The ex-ante evaluation identifies the following preferred policy option: the negotiation of a new implementing protocol for the Agreement, with some adjustments. In terms of the access and technical component, these adjustments would aim ensure greater alignment between the fishing opportunities negotiated and the effective use of these opportunities to improve the efficiency of the EU's investment. In terms of the sectoral support component, adjustments will enable both parties to maintain a bilateral sectoral partnership framework to support the implementation of the 2023-2027 National Fisheries and Aquaculture Strategy of Guinea-Bissau, allowing for continued cooperation on ocean governance, fisheries science, monitoring and control, the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU fishing), amongst others.