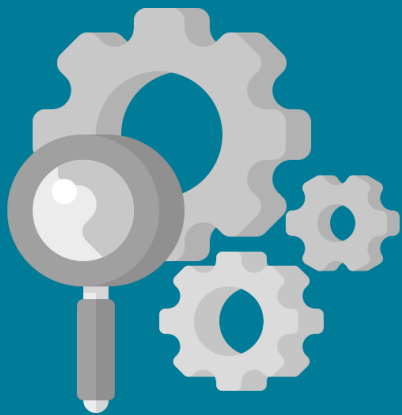


MEDAC Performance Review

18 June 2025, Malta



HOW



WHAT



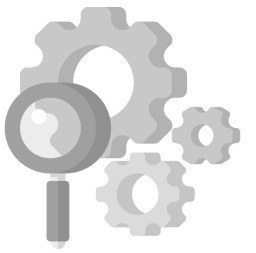
WHAT FOR



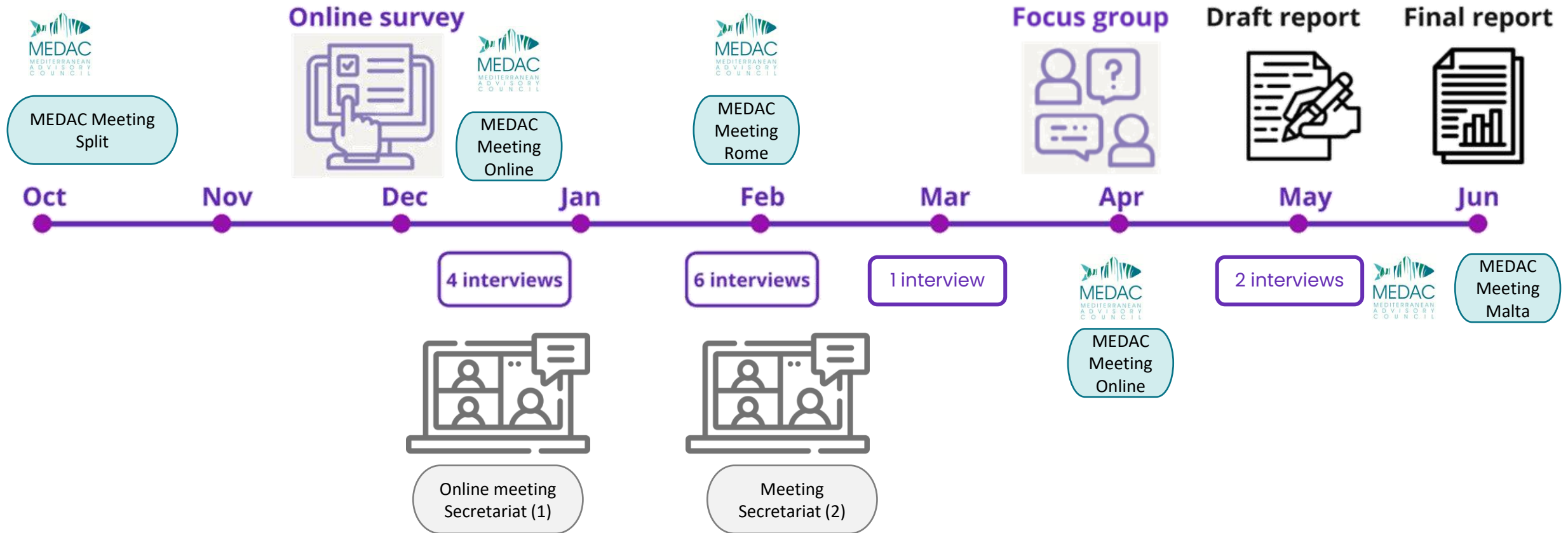
How Consultants Work

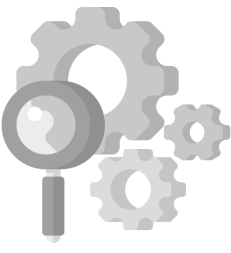
IT'S
NINE
THIRTY





Timeline Performance Review





Desk research

Work Plans and annual reports (10)
Regulation (10)
Advice (55)
Letters (22)
Contributions (23)
Multi-AC (10)
DG-Mare replies (53)
Meeting minutes
Presentations
Others



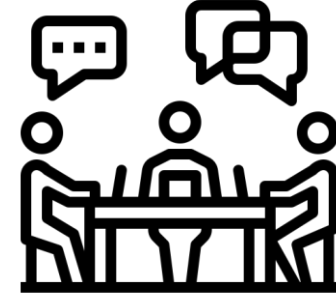
Online survey (1)



59% response ratio



Focus group (1)

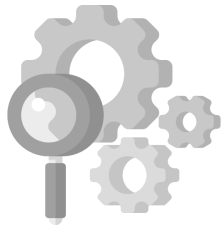
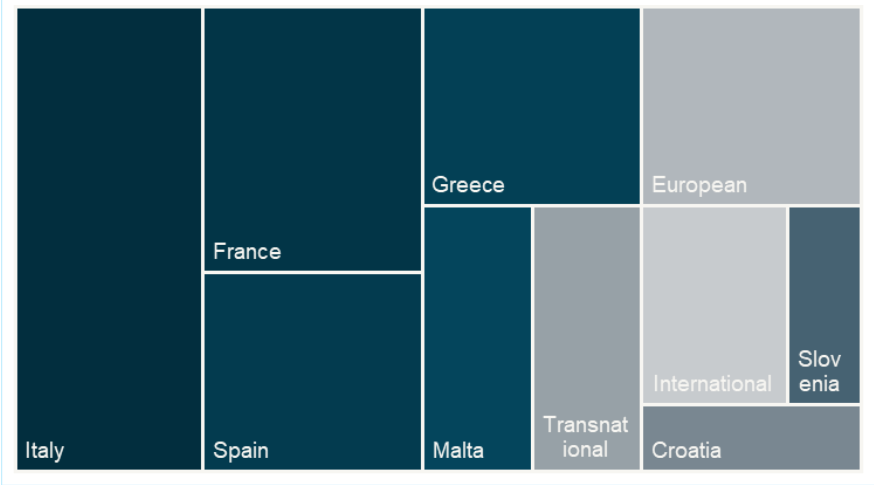


Interviews (13)



Observing meetings (17)

- Plurality
- Representativeness
- Comprehensiveness



Interviews criteria	Interviewees meeting the criteria
Type of organization (60/40)	2 (1 from the 60%- 1 from the 40)
Geographical representation	5 (EE, ES, EU, FR, HR, IT)
Organization	2 (MEDAC, DG-MARE)
Withdrawn member	1
Chair	1
Coordinators (WGs)	1
Coordinators (FGs)	1
Executive Secretariat	1
Exploratory interviews	3

Focus Group	60-40%	Role	Gegraph. area	MSs
Recreational Fisheries	40%	Vice-chair ExCOM	All	EU
SSF	60%	GA	EastMED	CY
NGO	40%	Coord. WG ExCOM	ALL	EU
Fishing Staff	60%	GA	WestMED	ES
	-	Secretariat	ALL	EU



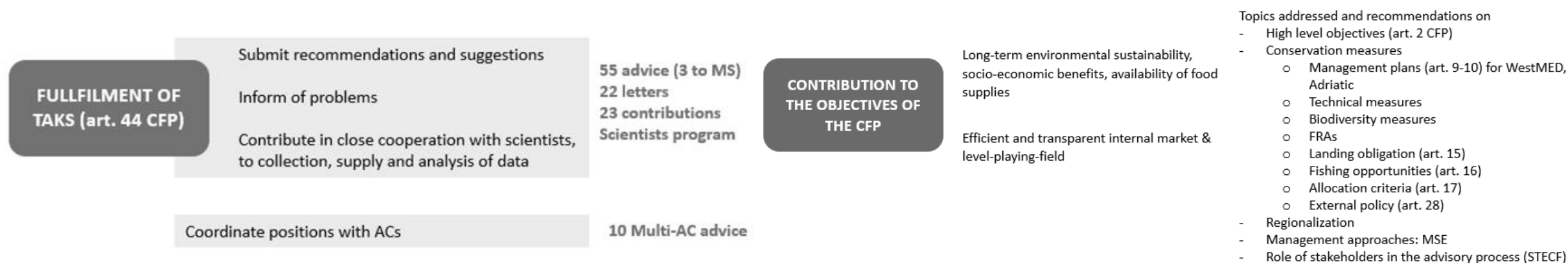
WHAT: 4 KEY FINDINGS



Key findings

MEDAC is a functional & recognised actor in EU fisheries governance

MEDAC working well as a platform where different stakeholders come together to give advice on Mediterranean fisheries. It has clear procedures, active participation, and is increasingly valued across its contributions to the EU and the GFCM.



Structural tensions persist within the organisation

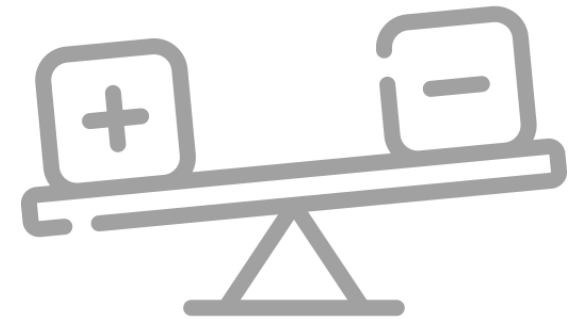
While consensus has become more frequent, a positive indication of growing collaboration, it is often fragile or procedural rather than substantive.

Persistent imbalances between sectors and organisation of varying sizes continue to shape deliberation and influence. The current model offers opportunities **to advance towards more equitable participation**, especially for smaller or less-resourced actors.

CONSENSUS RATE

ADVICE APPROVED BY CONSENSUS OVER TOTAL

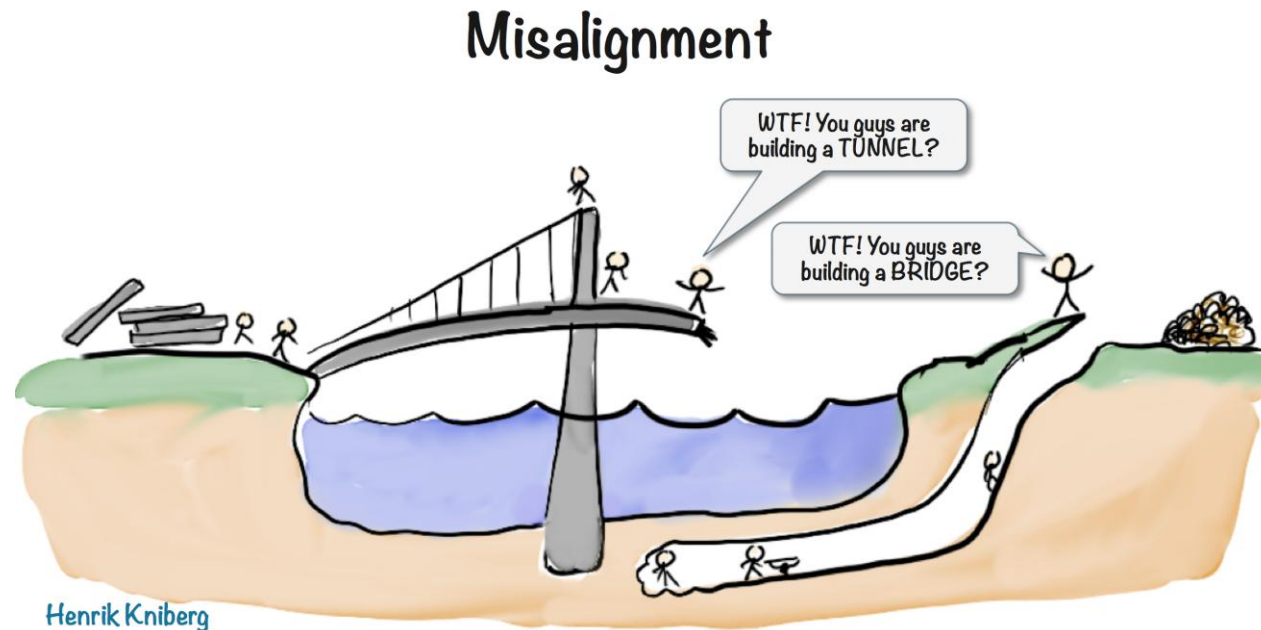
2020	2022	2024
30%	43%	92%





Misalignment between MEDAC's role and institutional expectations constrains effectiveness

Many MEDAC members see themselves as **helping to shape fisheries policy**, but the European Commission expects **advice based on stakeholders' experience and views**. This difference in expectations creates frustration, reduces how much the advice is used, and puts a strain on trust.





Reliance on the very effective Secretariat is both an asset and a vulnerability

The Secretariat is central to MEDAC's credibility, coherence, and operational delivery. Its coordination, knowledge integration, and facilitation are widely praised. However, the system's heavy reliance on a few key individuals presents a long-term vulnerability. Ensuring **institutional continuity and capacity distribution** will be critical for sustaining performance and adaptability



MEDAC best practices



Practice	Purpose	Why 'best practice'
Quick data gathering	To gather information on specific topics, e.g. impact of COVID-19 or input to GFCM Strategy 2021–2025.	Allows rapid and cost-effective mobilisation of member knowledge, offering timely input to policy processes.
Scientific experts	Nine experts proposed by members in line with Work Plan priorities.	Strengthens evidence base through regular updates on stock status, methodological advances & cross-cutting topics (e.g. MSP). Supports knowledge sharing & integration of science into advice.
Scientific Input	Presentation of data and findings during WG and FG meetings.	Ensures that discussions are grounded in up-to-date evidence, enhancing credibility and transparency.
Legislative Corner (introduced 2020)*	To update members on legislative steps of new regulations, including EU and GFCM measures.	Provides early notice of developments and anticipated implications, supporting informed engagement and reducing the learning curve.
Participation in research projects	Participation is governed by a standardised procedure with evaluation committee & public criteria (technical, administrative, financial).	Demonstrates procedural rigour and ensures transparency in engagement with external initiatives.
MEDAC Prize	Recognition of contributions by individuals or institutions.	Reinforces MEDAC's values, supports visibility and outreach, and contributes to building a shared culture.
Rotating venues for hybrid meetings	Organised in different countries and regions.	Enhances understanding of local contexts & sub-regional dynamics, while improving accessibility and visibility for members.
Advice design	Short and focus (3-4 pages) Systematic summary of scientific evidence Cross-reference to related MEDAC advice	Enhances clarity and increases the likelihood of advice being read, retained and acted upon. Ensures consistency
Strategic advisory leverage	Active involvement in STECF and GFCM as observers Input used to inform MEDAC debates and deliver outputs Proactive position: suggesting ToR and ways of provide input to be included in the assessments	Reinforces the advisory system and the use of available evidence. Enhances communication flows and inform broader MEDAC activities. Creates two-way processes



WHAT FOR: 6 RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommendations

R1. Establish practical measures to strengthen inclusive participation and deliberative quality

1.1 Training and support for chairs and coordinators on core **interpersonal competencies**: active listening, conflict resolution, etc. These sessions could be integrated into hybrid meetings as short, interactive components.

1.2. **Diversify meeting formats**: breakout groups, small-group exercises, and participatory methods that facilitate deeper discussion.

1.3 **Systematically summarise key action points at the end of each agenda item** and ensure their inclusion in the meeting minutes. This practice will improve follow-up, accountability, and continuity between sessions.



R2. Strengthen the strategic orientation of the work programme

R2.1 Introduce a strategic framing layer to the annual workplan, using brief bullet points to link each priority to longer-term goals.

R2.2 Use these **strategic links to guide meeting discussions** (priority, relevance and long-term impact). Prompting questions like “how does this issue align with our strategic priorities?” can focus deliberations and improve clarity

R2.3 Pilot simple reflective tools such as **‘stop-start-continue’ exercises** in Working or Focus Groups. These can identify activities that drain capacity, highlight new opportunities aligned with MEDAC’s mission, and reinforce high-impact practices worth sustaining.



R3. Redefine the operational meaning of consensus

R3.1 Under current EU regulation, consensus is often interpreted as “unanimity.” Other governance settings: **consensus pragmatically understood as broad agreement that allows a group to move forward, even if not all participants are fully aligned.**

MEDAC could pilot an alternative method. For a selected advice topic, the standard procedure would be followed, but with one key addition: **if a minority statement arises, it would be openly discussed by the group.** This would include **examining the rationale behind the statement and weighing its potential benefits and drawbacks for the overall coherence of the advice.**

The outcomes of the pilot should be documented and shared with the Commission to jointly reflect on its implications.

Recognising the value of the deliberative process, and accepting constructive disagreement, may ultimately strengthen both the legitimacy and utility of MEDAC’s contributions to CFP governance.



R4. Reassess membership fee structure to support inclusiveness.

R4.1 Introduce a tiered or needs-based fee system, allowing smaller or low-resource organisations to participate more fully.

R5. Strengthen succession planning, institutional resilience, and onboarding processes

- R5.1 Develop a **succession strategy** within the Secretariat and EXCOM. Mapping critical functions and progressively distributing roles (external liaison, coordination, and procedural oversight). Encourage experienced staff to share responsibilities gradually, allowing others to gain familiarity through observation and supported participation.
- R5.2 Facilitate **informal mentoring arrangements across MEDAC structures**. Pair long-standing members with newer participants to transfer contextual knowledge, internal culture, and lessons learned that are not easily captured in documents.
- R5.3 Create a concise **onboarding package for newcomers**, including MEDAC's role, rules of procedure, structure, and how to engage meaningfully in meetings and advice processes. It should be accessible in multiple languages and available online.



R6. Clarify institutional role and foster MEDAC position in the fisheries governance system

R6.1 Develop a short, shared narrative, co-created with members and discussed with the Commission that articulates MEDAC's advisory mandate, its value within the CFP system, and how its stakeholder-driven model complements institutional decision-making.

R6.2 Monitor the implementation of recommendations about the ACs role in the governance system, and systematically include evidence of progress in the annual work plan submitted to the Commission. Examples of ongoing efforts include:

- Encouraging Member States' fisheries regional group to better involve ACs.
- Recognizing the added weight given to the ACs responses during public consultation.
- Increasing the ACs visibility by consistently referencing their discussions and recommendations in new measures adopted.
- Inviting the ACs to defining the award criteria and selection criteria for an independent jury for the annual award for sustainable innovation in fisheries.

Thank you!

Our own positions may influence the interpretation and analysis of findings. Measures were implemented to remain neutral throughout the process, adhering to evidence-based methods to mitigate potential biases and ensure the credibility of the conclusions drawn.

While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the risk of error or misinterpretation cannot be entirely eliminated.

We sincerely thank all those who participated in and contributed to this evaluation. The members of MEDAC demonstrated their commitment to the performance review by offering valuable input and insights through an online survey, interviews, and a focus group. We highly appreciate the Secretariat's ongoing support and openness to iterative dialogue and consultation throughout the process.