



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

**NORTH WESTERN
WATERS**
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

FOCUS GROUP LANDING OBLIGATION

—
16 July 2025



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Agenda

10:30 – 10:35

1. Welcome and introductions

- Welcome from the Chair (Emiel Brouckaert)
- Apologies
- Adoption of the agenda
- Action points from the last meeting (22 Nov. 2024)

10:35 – 11:45

2. NWWAC draft advice on Fishing Opportunities 2026

11:45 – 11:55

3. Landing Obligation Study: Highlights from the European Commission Meeting on the Study presentation

11:55 – 12:00

4. AOB & Action points and closure of the meeting

Action points from the last meeting

1. FG will continue to follow developments on the evaluation of the landing obligation.
2. Secretariat to circulate updated version of the letter on priority stocks for ICES benchmarks to the FG for final review before starting the approval procedure.
3. Secretariat to share updated version of the choke spreadsheet, as well as an updated advice document, for FG members to review.

A photograph of a fishing boat's deck. In the foreground, there is a large pile of green fishing nets. Three crew members are visible: one in a yellow raincoat in the background, and two in the foreground wearing red and yellow gear. The boat has a white cabin with a green stripe. A large white crane or winch is mounted on the deck. The sea and a clear blue sky are visible in the background.

2. NWWAC draft advice on Fishing Opportunities 2026

3. Landing Obligation Study: Highlights from the European Commission Meeting on the Study presentation (08 July)

- Assessed under the **five evaluation criteria of the Better Regulation Guidelines**: effectiveness; efficiency; relevance; coherence; EU “added value”
- Plus, two further aspects: complementarity and sustainability

EFFECTIVENESS

The LO has **not been effectively implemented**. Despite some progress in promoting selective fishing and operational flexibility widespread use of exemptions, limited market development for unwanted catch, and significant regional and economic disparities have hindered its overall impact

EFFICIENCY

The LO has led to **additional costs** and **administrative burdens** for both public authorities and operators, with **efficiency gains limited** by extensive use of **flexibilities** and **uneven implementation** across Member States.

RELEVANCE

While the LO is **relevant to EU policy goals**, its perceived and **practical relevance** among stakeholders, particularly fishers, remains **limited**, reflecting a **gap** between **strategic objectives and operational realities**.

COHERENCE

While the **overall objective** of the LO is **coherent** with the other EU interventions and international obligations, the **manner in which it has been implemented is less so**

EU ADDED VALUE

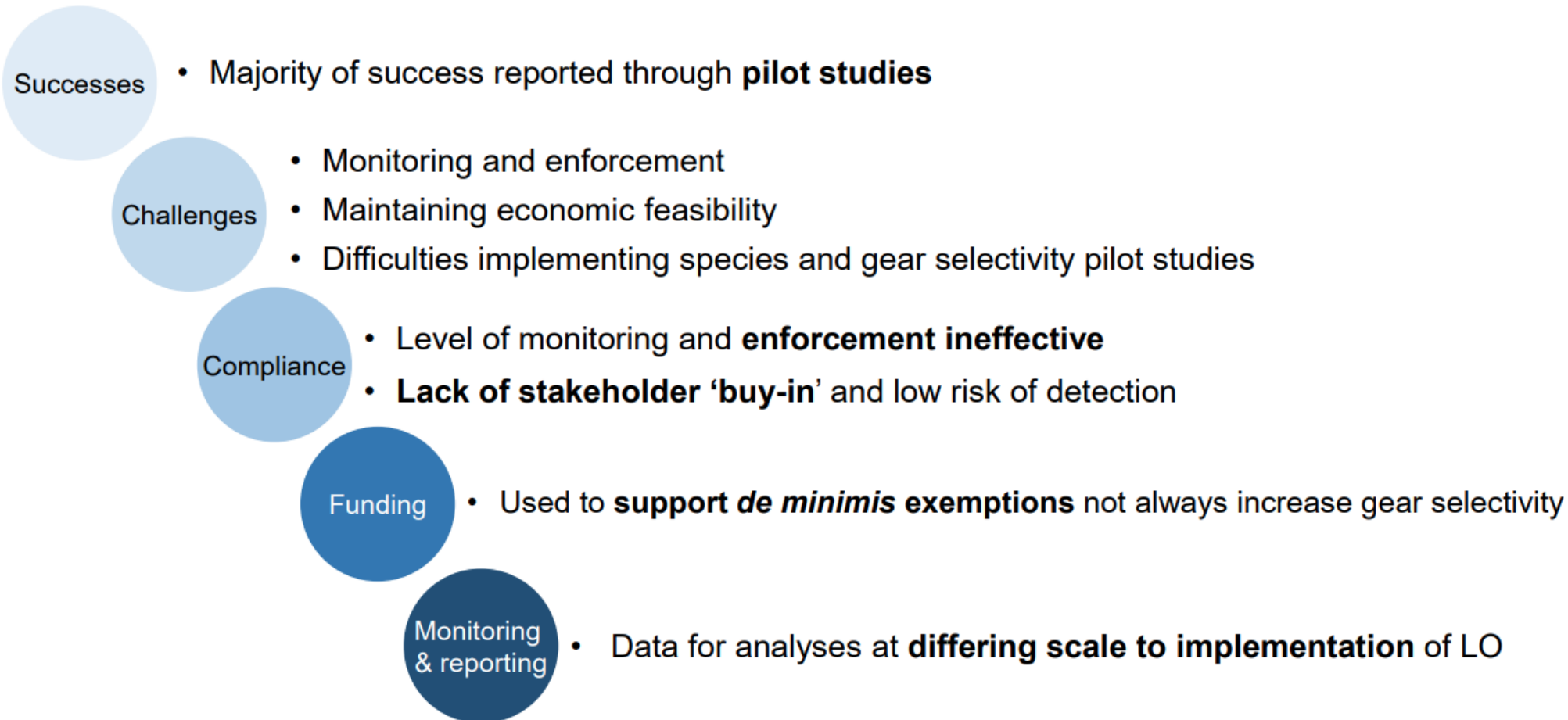
The EU-level intervention has been **essential in facilitating coordinated implementation** of the LO, but its added value is **constrained** by **uneven uptake, compliance challenges**, and **limited region-specific adaptation**.

COMPLEMENTARITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

While the LO is **conceptually complementary** to other EU and MS policies, its practical integration has been **inconsistent**, and its **sustainability** depends on **enhanced enforcement, infrastructure** and **stakeholder engagement**.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall



Recommendations

- ✓ Strengthen monitoring and enforcement
- ✓ Enhance gear selectivity
- ✓ Improve data collection and analysis
- ✓ Provide economic and operational support
- ✓ Foster collaboration and targeted interventions

North Sea and North Western Waters

- ✓ Successful gear **modifications piloted in trawl fisheries**, including square mesh panels, square mesh cylinders and T90 codends
- ✗ **Reduced fishing opportunities** due to UK Exit, and ability to swap quotas

A dramatic sunset or sunrise over the ocean. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, with bright golden light breaking through in several places, creating a high-contrast scene. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow. In the foreground, the dark blue water of the ocean is visible. A small boat is silhouetted against the bright horizon line in the lower right quadrant.

4. AOB & Summary of actions agreed and decisions adopted by the Chair