USING SCIENCE DIPLOMACY
FOR ADDRESSING GLOBAL CHALLENGES

SCIENCE ADVICE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: CRAFTING COLLECTIVE UNDERSTANDING OF TRANSNATIONAL ISSUES

IN THINKING ABOUT SCIENCE DIPLOMACY, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOT ONLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE FORMAL STRUCTURES FOR SCIENCE DIPLOMACY, BUT ALSO TO CONSIDER THE WAYS IN WHICH INTERNAL CAPACITIES FOR SCIENCE DIPLOMACY MIGHT ALREADY BE BUILT INTO DIPLOMATIC SYSTEMS.

The European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Carlos Moedas, has previously suggested that the European and global research infrastructures can and should be mobilized as important tools and sites of science diplomacy.

At the international level, a key part of these research infrastructures is the healthy functioning of a science advice system able to inform the development of policy. Science advice in the EU can be understood as a science advice ecosystem. As with national settings with well-developed science advice systems, such as the UK, there is no single structure that provides scientific knowledge into the decision-making process, rather there are a range of structures that include a mix of external bodies; mandated bodies; and internal bodies that each contribute input to the decision-making process. Against this backdrop, this report focuses on the science advice of the EU.

Focusing on fisheries management, we explored the broader implications of the working of science diplomacy. The EU is a central player in science diplomacy though many of its formal structures are still emergent, experimental and often contested. Indeed, the EU does not have a single national culture for how knowledge is validated; there is great diversity across Member States. Thus, a multi-level governance structure, presents challenges for design and implementation of an authoritative science advice system at the EU level.

Science advice for fisheries has had a long history in Europe, and involves the breadth of internal, external and mandated structures for bringing scientific knowledge into the decision-making process. The science advice system for fisheries is complex. Fisheries are mostly coordinated through the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The CFP is implemented by the European Commission whose work in this area is carried out by the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE). There are a wide range of science advice structures that provide science advice for fisheries management: The Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee of Fisheries (STECF) a group of experts appointed directly by the Commission, The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, an intergovernmental membership organization, and the Science Advice Mechanism (SAM), which provides independent science advice to the commission (see figure below).

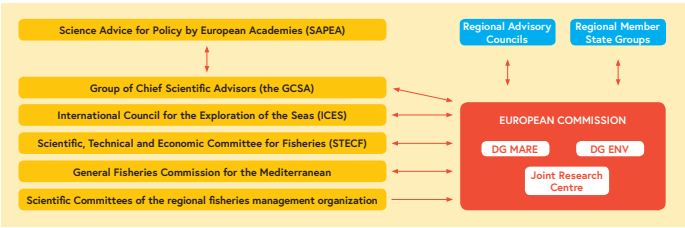

FIGURE: An overview of the advisory system for fisheries in the EU, including the Common Fisheries Policy and related strategy

KEY FINDINGS OF THIS CASE STUDY

- **Science advice bodies can be understood as spaces in which communities of practice are established and through which they navigate different cultures – understanding the needs of EU policymaking while also recognising the scientific constraints.**
- **Many of the science advice bodies see their role as not only providing evidentiary input into the policy process, but also as communities of practice. This allows for growing a capacity in the skills of science advice and trust development.**
- **Communities of practice are built through the production of networks between existing organisations that have skills in a particular area. They have a geographical spread and reach. There are a number of key elements that are central to science advice and diplomacy: trust and 'scientific camaraderie' (it is a bit of a 'big family thing'), consensus, transparency, and cross cultural working skills.**
- **Political temporality and proper timing is important to science advice.**

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Suggest to monitor and improve ongoing coordination of the recruitment of scientists into the field so as to avoid an ad-hoc approach where "there is a general absorption of additional knowledge by osmosis".
- It is important to consider institutionalisation across different national settings; this can only be achieved through experimentation and a willingness to learn.
- By noticing and agreeing the ways science advisory groups scope out their terms of reference documents, we can improve science advice – this offers insights into the ways in which interstate negotiations can be understood.

Science advice bodies can be understood as spaces in which communities of practice are established.

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