DRAFT: REVISION OF THE WPNT PROGRAM OF WORK (2018–2022)

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 26 JUNE 2016

PURPOSE

To ensure that participants at the 7th Working Party on Neritic Tunas (WPNT07) revise the Program of Work for the WPNT by taking into consideration the specific requests of the Commission and Scientific Committee.

BACKGROUND

Scientific Committee

At the 19th Session of the SC:

(Para. 169) The SC **NOTED** paper IOTC–2016–SC19–09 which provided the Scientific Committee (SC) with a proposed Program of Work for each of its Working Parties (WP), including prioritisation of the elements requested by each WP.

(Para. 170) The SC **NOTED** the proposed Program of Work and priorities for the Scientific Committee and each of the Working Parties and **AGREED** to a consolidated Program of Work as outlined in Appendix XXXIVa-g. The Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of each working party shall ensure that the efforts of their working party are focused on the core areas contained within the appendix, taking into account any new research priorities identified by the Commission at its next Session.

Commission

The Commission has made a number of requests that call on the Scientific Committee, via the WPNT, to undertake specific tasks. These requests need to be incorporated into the Program of Work for the WPNT:

Resolution 17/07 ***On the prohibition to use large-scale driftnets in the IOTC area***

(para. 2) The use of large-scale driftnets[1] on the high seas within the IOTC area of competence shall be prohibited. The use of large-scale driftnets in the entire IOTC area of competence shall be prohibited by 1 January 2022.

(para. 7) The Commission shall periodically assess whether additional measures should be adopted and implemented to ensure that large-scale driftnets are not used in the IOTC area of competence and to take into account the latest advice of the Scientific Committee. The first such assessment shall take place in 2023.

Resolution 11/04 ***On a regional observer scheme***

(para. 2) In order to improve the collection of scientific data, at least 5 % of the number of operations/sets for each gear type by the fleet of each CPC while fishing in the IOTC area of competence of 24 meters overall length and over, and under 24 meters if they fish outside their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) shall be covered by this observer scheme. For vessels under 24 meters if they fish outside their EEZ, the above mentioned coverage should be achieved progressively by January 2013.

(para. 4) The number of the artisanal fishing vessels landings shall also be monitored at the landing place by field samplers. The indicative level of the coverage of the artisanal fishing vessels should progressively increase towards 5% of the total levels of vessel activity (i.e. total number of vessel trips or total number of vessels active).

[1] "Large-scale driftnets" are defined as gillnets or other nets or a combination of nets that are more than 2.5 kilometres in length whose purpose is to enmesh, entrap, or entangle fish by drifting on the surface of, or in, the water column.

(para. 15) The elements of the Observer Scheme, notably those regarding its coverage, are subject to review and revision, as appropriate, for application in 2012 and subsequent years. Basing on the experience of other tuna RFMOs, the IOTC Scientific Committee will elaborate an observer working manual, a template to be used for reporting (including minimum data fields) and a training program.

The 21st Session of the Commission

(para. 38) The Commission noted that IOTC–2017–S21–PropL *On the conservation and management of IOTC Kawakawa, Longtail Tuna and Spanish Mackerel* was withdrawn. There was only limited agreement with this proposal, due largely to the uncertainty on the status of the stocks as a result of a general lack of data on catches, as well as concern by one CPC that the proposal could set an unacceptable precedent for allocation by seeking to cap catches. The Commission encouraged CPCs to improve the data collection and submission. The Commission encouraged Coastal States catching neritic tunas to propose and present to next year's Commission meeting possible management measures to recover the over-exploited IOTC neritic stocks, in response to the recommendation of the SC.

DISCUSSION

Participants at the WPNT07 are requested to consider the priorities set by the Commission and the Scientific Committee, via Conservation and Management Measures, and revise its Program of Work (previously outlined in paper IOTC–2017–WPNT07–03) to match those priorities.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the WPNT:

1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2017–WPNT07–08, which encouraged the WPNT to further develop and refine its Program of Work for 2018–2022 to align with the requests and directives from the Commission and Scientific Committee.
2) **RECOMMEND** a revised Program of Work for 2018–2022 to the Scientific Committee for its consideration and potential endorsement.

WORKING PARTY ON NERITIC TUNAS PROGRAM OF WORK (2018–2022)

The current Program of Work as approved by the SC consists of the following:

- **Table 1**: Priority topics for obtaining the information necessary to develop stock status indicators for neritic tunas in the Indian Ocean;
- **Table 2**: Stock assessment schedule.
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This is to be reviewed, discussed and updated for the next 5 years by participants during the WPNT07meeting to be put forward for consideration by S20.

Table 1. Priority topics for obtaining the information necessary to develop stock status indicators for neritic tunas in the Indian Ocean;

	Topic	Sub-topic and project	Priority	Est. budget and/or potential source	Timing				
					2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1.	Stock structure (connectivity)	Genetic research to determine the connectivity of neritic tunas throughout their distributions	High (1)	1.3 m Euro: European Union					
		➢ Determine the degree of shared stocks for all neritic tunas under the IOTC mandate in the Indian Ocean, so as to better equip the SC in providing management advice based on unit stocks delineated by geographic distribution and connectivity. ➢ Genetic research to determine the connectivity of neritic tunas throughout their distributions: Table 2b should be used as a starting point for research project development to delineate potential stock structure for neritic tunas in the Indian Ocean. ➢ The IOTC Secretariat to coordinate a review of the available literature on neritic tuna stock structure across the Indian Ocean to assess the data already available such as the location of spawning grounds to identify potential sub-stocks.		TBD					
2.	Biological information (parameters for stock assessment)	Age and growth research; Age-at-Maturity	High (2)	CPCs directly					
		➢ Quantitative biological studies are necessary for all neritic tunas throughout their range to determine key biological parameters including age-at-maturity and fecundity-at-age/length relationships, age-length keys, age and growth, which will be fed into future stock assessments.							

3.	CPUE standardisation	Develop standardised CPUE series for the main fisheries for longtail, kawakawa, Indo-Pacific King mackerel and Spanish mackerel in the Indian Ocean, with the aim of developing CPUE series for stock assessment purposes.	High (4)	CPUE Workshop (TBD)					
		➢ Longtail tuna. Priority fleets: Iran (gillnet), Indonesia (line and gillnet), Malaysia (coastal purse seine), Pakistan, Oman, Thailand (coastal purse seine) and India (all gillnet).		CPCs directly					
		➢ Spanish mackerel. Priority fleets: Gillnet fisheries of Indonesia, India, Iran, Pakistan and Oman.		CPCs directly					
		➢ Kawakawa. Priority fleets: Indonesia (purse seine/ line), Malaysia (coastal purse seine), Thailand (coastal purse seine), India (gillnet), Iran (gillnet) and Pakistan (gillnet).		CPCs directly					
		➢ Indo-Pacific king mackerel. Priority fleets: Gillnet fisheries of India, Indonesia, Pakistan (gillnet/troll) and Iran.		CPCs directly					
4.	Stock assessment / Stock indicators	Develop and compare multiple assessment approaches to determine stock status for longtail tuna, kawakawa and Spanish mackerel (SS3, ASPIC etc). ➢ The Weight-of-Evidence approach should be used to determine stock status, by building layers of partial evidence, such as CPUE indices combined with catch data, life-history parameters and yield-per recruit metrics, as well as the use of data poor assessment approaches. ➢ The following data should be collated and made available for collaborative analysis: 1) catch and effort by species and gear by landing site; 2) operational data: stratify this by vessel, month, and year for the development as an indicator of CPUE over time; and 3) operational data: collate other information on fishing techniques (i.e. area fished, gear specifics, depth, environmental condition (near shore, open ocean, etc.) and vessel size (length/horsepower).	High (3)	IOTC Regular Budget					

Table 2. Proposed assessment schedule for the IOTC Working Party on 2018-2022

Working Party on Neritic Tunas					
Species	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
Bullet tuna	Data-poor assessment	Indicators	Data-poor assessment	Indicators	Indicators
Frigate tuna	Data-poor assessment	Indicators	Data-poor assessment	Indicators	Indicators
Indo-Pacific king mackerel	**Full assessment***	Indicators	Data-poor assessment	**Full assessment***	Indicators
Kawakawa	**Full assessment***	Data-poor assessment	Indicators	**Full assessment***	Indicators
Longtail tuna	Indicators	**Full assessment***	Indicators	Indicators	**Full assessment***
Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel	Indicators	Data-poor assessment	**Full assessment***	Indicators	Data-poor assessment

*Including data poor stock assessment methods; Note: the assessment schedule may be changed depending on the annual review of fishery indicators, or SC and Commission requests.