REVISION OF THE WPNT PROGRAM OF WORK (2017–2021)

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PURPOSE

To ensure that participants at the 6th Working Party on Neritic Tunas (WPNT06) 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 18th Session of the SC:

(Para. 152)	The SC **NOTED** paper IOTC–2015–SC18–09 which provided the Scientific Committee (SC) with a proposed Program of Work for each of its Working Parties (WP), including preliminary prioritisation of the elements requested by each WP. The aim is to develop an overall Program of Work Plan for 2015–19 which will deliver the information the Commission has requested to meet the objectives of the IOTC.
(Para. 153)	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 XXXIV. 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.
(Para. 154)	The SC **REQUESTED** that during all future Working Party meetings, each group not only develop a Draft Program of Work for the next five years containing low, medium and high priority projects, but that all High Priority projects are ranked. The intention is that the SC would then be able to review the rankings and develop a consolidated list of the highest priority projects to meet the needs of the Commission. Where possible, budget estimates should be determined, as well as the identification of potential funding sources.

Commission

At Sessions of the Commission, Conservation and Management Measures adopted contained elements that call on the Scientific Committee, via the WPNT, to undertake specific tasks. These requests will need to be incorporated into a revised Program of Work for the WPNT:

Resolution 12/12 *To prohibit the use of large-scale driftnets on the high seas in the IOTC area*

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

(para. 6) The IOTC shall periodically assess whether additional measures should be adopted and implemented to ensure that large-scale driftnets are not used on the high seas in the IOTC area of competence. The first such assessment shall take place in 2013.

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)

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[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.

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).

(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.

DISCUSSION

Participants at the WPNT06 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–2016–WPNT06–03) to match those priorities.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the WPNT:

1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2016–WPNT06–08, which encouraged the WPNT to further develop and refine its Program of Work for 2017–2021 to align with the requests and directives from the Commission and Scientific Committee.
2) **RECOMMEND** a revised Program of Work for 2017–2021 to the Scientific Committee for its consideration and potential endorsement.

WORKING PARTY ON NERITIC TUNAS PROGRAM OF WORK (2017–2021)

The Program of Work consists of the following, noting that a timeline for implementation would be developed by the SC once it has agreed to the priority projects across all of its Working Parties:

- **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.

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

Topic	Sub-topic and project	Priority	Est. budget and/or potential source	Timing				
				2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
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 ➢ 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	High (2)	CPCs directly					

	assessments.							
3. CPUE standardisation	Develop standardised CPUE series for the main fisheries for longtail, kawakawa 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 (purse seine), Pakistan, Oman and India (all gillnet).		CPCs directly	▓				
	➢ Spanish mackerel. Priority fleets: Gillnet fisheries of Indonesia, India, Iran and Oman.		CPCs directly		▓			
	➢ Kawakawa. Priority fleets: Indonesia (purse seine/ line), India (gillnet), Iran (gillnet) and Pakistan (gillnet).		CPCs directly			▓		
	➢ Indo-Pacific king mackerel. Priority fleets: Gillnet fisheries of India, Indonesia 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. Assessment schedule for the IOTC Working Party on 2017-2021

Working Party on Neritic Tunas					
Species	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
Bullet tuna	Indicators	Data-poor assessment	Indicators	Data-poor assessment	Indicators
Frigate tuna	Indicators	Data-poor assessment	Indicators	Data-poor assessment	Indicators
Indo-Pacific king mackerel	Indicators	**Full assessment***	Indicators	Data-poor assessment	**Full assessment***
Kawakawa	Data-poor assessment	**Full assessment***	Data-poor assessment	Indicators	**Full assessment***
Longtail tuna	Data-poor assessment	Indicators	**Full assessment***	Indicators	Indicators
Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel	**Full assessment***	Indicators	Data-poor assessment	**Full assessment***	Indicators

*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.