

28 January 2019

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing with regard to the forthcoming meeting of the Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria (TCAC05) which is to be held in Seychelles from 11 to 13 March 2019.

You will recall that discussion at our last meeting (TCAC04 in February 2018) focussed on two papers on allocation that had been submitted by delegations, one by the European Union, and the other by 10 CPCs from the Group of G16 like-minded coastal States. The Meeting Report on TCAC04 identifies, in its paragraph 17, areas of common ground reached among the participants in these discussions.

TCAC04 also requested the Secretariat to prepare catch histories for each CPC, although uncertainties and gaps in the current data sets were also noted in the Report.

Subsequently, at the Commission meeting in May, the sponsors of the two papers advised that they had further developed their papers, and there was further discussion. The Secretariat was also requested to engage an independent consultant to develop an allocation model and associated simulations, to be provided to TCAC05. As colleagues will be aware, the consultant's report has been completed, and it is available on the IOTC website for our forthcoming meeting. The Commission also requested several other actions to be taken in advance of TCAC05.

Colleagues will now have had the opportunity to analyse the consultant's report, and I assume that some colleagues will want to have the opportunity to discuss it at TCAC05. Provision will of course be made in the draft Agenda for this. That said, I would urge colleagues to come to TCAC05 with the objective of keeping such discussion very focussed and very brief. The simulations are based on the two proposals which are on the table, which contain significant differences between them, and neither of which is agreed. While the simulations are certainly useful in informing our discussion - and we owe a debt of gratitude for them - a protracted discussion of them at our forthcoming meeting will in my view do little to advance our work.

I suggest that we would be better focussing on the substance of the two proposals that we have before us, and in particular those areas where they depart from each other, with the objective of narrowing down those differences. Colleagues may of course wish to refer to the simulations, in passing, in the course of the discussion of the proposals but preferably not as the main focus.

Consistent with this, I would ask colleagues, in their preparations for TCAC05 to identify areas in the proposals where they would be willing to compromise so as to further advance our work

With two well-developed proposals on the table, we are now in a position to start bridging the differences between those proposals, of course on the usual basis that “nothing is agreed until everything is agreed.” It will be apparent to colleagues that simply insisting on maintaining their positions as reflected in the present proposals is not going to get us to the point of agreement. Realistically, neither of the two proposals on the table is going to be entirely acceptable to the other point of view, and compromise will be necessary.

I would urge colleagues to think, in advance of our meeting, what those compromises realistically might be. I would also urge colleagues to reach out to others in advance of our meeting – particularly those holding different views - to try to bridge the gaps.

I would of course welcome any thoughts or suggestions from colleagues regarding our forthcoming meeting and the way forward and, as last time, I would like to invite any colleagues who wish to do so, to contact me in advance of the meeting. Contact could be made initially through my email address:

[don\\_maria\\_mackay@msn.com](mailto:don_maria_mackay@msn.com)

I am also hoping to arrive in Seychelles at least a day ahead of the meeting, and would be very happy to meet with colleagues for any informal consultations during that time.

I very much look forward to meeting colleagues again at TCAC05.

Warm regards

Don MacKay  
Independent Chair