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## PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 23<sup>rd</sup> SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT AND SC CHAIRPERSON, 15 NOVEMBER 2021

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### PURPOSE

To provide participants at the 24<sup>th</sup> Scientific Committee (SC) with an update on the progress made in implementing the recommendations from the previous SC meeting, and to provide alternative recommendations for the consideration and potential endorsement by participants as appropriate given any progress.

### BACKGROUND

At the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the SC, participants agreed on a series of actions to be taken by participants, CPCs, and the IOTC Secretariat on a range of issues. The subsequent table developed and agreed to by the SC was endorsed at its December 2020 meeting.

### DISCUSSION

The Rules of Procedure of the Scientific Committee include the following seven core tasks, which are to be supported by the various Working Parties.

- a) recommend policies and procedures for the collection, processing, dissemination and analysis of fishery data;
- b) facilitate the exchange and critical review among scientists of information on research and operation of fisheries of relevance to the Commission;
- c) develop and coordinate cooperative research programmes involving Members of the Commission in support of fisheries management;
- d) assess and report to the Commission on the status of stocks of relevance to the Commission and the likely effects of further fishing and of different fishing patterns and intensities;
- e) formulate and report to the sub-commission, as appropriate, on recommendations concerning conservation, fisheries management and research, including consensus, majority and minority views;
- f) consider any matter referred to by the Commission;
- g) carry out other technical activities of relevance to the Commission.

Recalling that the SC, at its 16<sup>th</sup> Session adopted a set of reporting terminology SC16.07 (para. 23), which was subsequently endorsed by the Commission at its 18<sup>th</sup> Session in 2014 (S18, para 10), to further improve the clarity of information sharing from, and among the science bodies, the following two term levels should be noted when interpreting the Reports and [Appendix I](#) to this paper:

**Level 1:** From a subsidiary body of the Commission to the next level in the structure of the Commission:

**RECOMMENDED, RECOMMENDATION:** Any conclusion or request for an action to be undertaken, from a subsidiary body of the Commission (Committee or Working Party), which is to be formally provided to the next level in the structure of the Commission for its consideration/endorsement (e.g. from a Working Party to the Scientific Committee; from a Committee to the Commission). The intention is that the higher body will consider the recommended action for endorsement under its own mandate, if the subsidiary body does not already have the required mandate. Ideally this should be task specific and contain a timeframe for completion.

**Level 2:** From a subsidiary body of the Commission to a CPC, the IOTC Secretariat, or other body (not the Commission) to carry out a specified task:

**REQUESTED:** This term should only be used by a subsidiary body of the Commission if it does not wish to have the request formally adopted/endorsed by the next level in the structure of the Commission. For example, if a Committee wishes to seek additional input from a CPC on a particular topic, but does not wish to formalise the request beyond the mandate of the Committee, it may request that a set action be undertaken. Ideally this should be task specific and contain a timeframe for the completion.

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The Recommendations endorsed by the SC at its 23<sup>rd</sup> Session are contained in [Appendix I](#) for the consideration, review of progress, and revision/reiteration as necessary by the SC24. The SC participants are also encouraged to review the Progress on the Recommendations of Working Parties prepared by the Secretariat and presented to each Working Party for their consideration and revision (IOTC-2021-WPNT11-06, IOTC-2021-WPEB17(AS)-06, IOTC-2021-WPB19-06, IOTC-2021-WPM12-06, IOTC-2021-WPTT23(DP)-06, IOTC-2021-WPDCS17-06, IOTC-2019-WPTmT07(AS)-06).

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the SC:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2021–SC24–10 which detailed the progress made in implementing the recommendations and the requests of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Scientific Committee (SC23);
- 2) **AGREE** to consider and revise as necessary, the recommendations, and for these to be combined with any new recommendations arising from SC24.

**APPENDICES**

**Appendix I:** Progress made on the Recommendations of SC23

SC23 Report	SC recommendations	Update/Progress
<p>SC23.08 Para. 31</p> <p>SC23.09 Para. 32</p>	<p><b>National Reports from CPCs</b></p> <p><b>NOTING</b> that the Commission, at its 15th Session (in 2011), expressed concern regarding the limited submission of National Reports to the SC, and stressed the importance of providing the reports by all CPCs, the SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Commission note that in 2020, 25 reports were provided by CPCs (23 in 2019, 26 in 2018, 23 in 2017, 23 in 2016, 26 in 2015) (Table 2).</p> <p>The SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Compliance Committee and Commission note the lack of compliance by 6 Contracting Parties (Members) and 2 Cooperating Non-Contracting Party (CNCs) that did not submit a National Report to the Scientific Committee in 2020, noting that the Commission agreed that the submission of the annual reports to the Scientific Committee is mandatory</p>	<p><b>Update:</b> Ongoing. CPCs are encouraged to provide national reports whether or not they are attending the SC meeting and that the provision of national reports is a mandatory requirement for all CPCs</p> <p><b>Update:</b> The SC chair presented the report of the S23 to the Commission in June 2021. The Commission noted this issue with concern.</p>
<p>SC23.10 Para. 59</p>	<p><b>Report of the 15th Session of the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB15)</b></p> <p>The SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Commission note the current status of development and implementation of National Plans of Action (NPOAs) for sharks and seabirds, and the implementation of the FAO guidelines to reduce marine turtle mortality in fishing operations, by each CPC as provided in Appendix 5, recalling that the IPOA-Seabirds and IPOA-Sharks were adopted by the FAO in 1999 and 2000, respectively, and recommended the development of NPOAs.</p>	<p><b>Update:</b> Ongoing</p>
<p>SC23.11 Para. 78</p>	<p><b>Report of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Working Party on Tropical Tunas (WPTT22)</b></p> <p>The SC <b>NOTED</b> that the reference points for skipjack tuna are defined with respect to unfishable spawning biomass only in resolution 16/02; nonetheless the notation is in terms of B (total exploitable biomass) instead of SB (spawning biomass). Although the resolution also specified Etarg (annual equilibrium exploitation rate associated with the unfishable target spawning biomass), it was intended as a control parameter for the harvest control rule, rather than as an explicit target. Meanwhile Resolution 16/02 did not define a limit exploitation rate (Elim). The SC further <b>NOTED</b> that resolution 15/10 had specified a default depletion-based target and limit fishing mortality rate but it was discussed whether these are appropriate for skipjack tuna (the default values are defined only when MSY-based reference points can not be estimated robustly according to 15/10). As such the SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the skipjack MSE project to revisit these reference points, including to investigate the plausibility of establishing a limit reference point for fishing mortality (or</p>	<p><b>Update:</b> The updated work on the skipjack harvest control has been presented to the TCMP and WPTT in 2021. The Recommendations from the SC have been taken into account in the updated work.</p>

	exploitation rate)) and to evaluate the differences on the catch forecasts by using total biomass instead of spawning biomass in the HCR.	
SC23.12 Para. 107	<b>Report of the 16th session of the working party on Data Collection and Statistics (WPDCS16)</b> Furthermore, the SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> the Commission to consider how to best take into account the confidentiality aspects inherent to such a dataset (e.g. through updates to Res. 12/02) while at the same time ensuring proper attribution of its ownership. (Refer to paras. 104 and 106 for qualifying details on this Recommendation)	<b>Update:</b> Ongoing
SC23.13 Para. 109	<b>ACKNOWLEDGING</b> a potential lack of clarity in the current definition of “For reporting (Optional)” data elements in the context of the ROS minimum standard data fields, the SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Commission require CPCs to report such fields to the IOTC Secretariat (as part of their regular ROS data submissions) when these are available to the national observer programmes.	<b>Update:</b> Ongoing
SC23.14 Para. 111	For this reason, the SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that an ad-hoc, intersessional Working Group on the development of EM Programme Standard be constituted and physical or virtual workshops (depending on the circumstances) be held to further progress with the definition of EMS minimum standards.	<b>Update:</b> Completed. The First ad hoc Working Group on Electronic Monitoring Standards was held in November 2021.
SC23.15 Para. 114	<b>Invited Expert(s) at the WP meetings</b> Given the importance of external peer review for working party meetings, the SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Commission continues to allocate sufficient budget for an invited expert to be regularly invited to all scientific WP meetings.	<b>Update:</b> Ongoing. The Commission has provided budget for invited experts for 2021 and 2022.
SC23.16 Para. 116	<b>Meeting participation fund</b> The SC reiterated its <b>RECOMMENDATION</b> that the IOTC Rules of Procedure (2014), for the administration of the Meeting Participation Fund be modified so that applications are due not later than 60 days, and that the full Draft paper be submitted no later than 45 days before the start of the relevant meeting. The aim is to allow the Selection Panel to review the full paper rather than just the abstract, and provide guidance on areas for improvement, as well as the suitability of the application to receive funding using the IOTC MPF. The earlier submission dates would also assist with visa application procedures for candidates.	<b>Update:</b> No Progress as due to all meetings being online, the MPF has not been utilized since 2019.
SC23.17 Para. 117	<b>IOTC species identification guides: Tuna and tuna-like species</b>	<b>Update:</b> Ongoing. Budget has been made available through the IOTC main budget and an EU grant to continue the printing of ID cards and this has continued in 2021.

	The SC reiterated its <b>RECOMMENDATION</b> that the Commission allocates budget towards continuing the translation and printing of the IOTC species ID guides so that hard copies of the identification cards can continue to be printed as many CPCs scientific observers, both on board and port, still do not have smart phone technology/hardware access and need to have hard copies on board.	
SC23.18 Para. 118	<b>General - Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the SC and its subsidiary bodies</b> The SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Commission note and endorse the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons for the SC and its subsidiary bodies for the coming years, as provided in Appendix 7.	<b>Update:</b> Completed
SC23.19 Para. 163	<b>General - Consultants</b> Noting the highly beneficial and relevant work done by IOTC stock assessment consultants in previous years, the SC <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the engagement of consultants be continued for each coming year based on the Program of Work. Consultants will be hired to supplement the skill set available within the IOTC Secretariat and CPCs.	<b>Update:</b> Ongoing. Several consultants were contracted in 2021.