

TCAC Decision Making and Reporting

6-7 February 2025

TCAC14

TCAC Chairperson

Background

1. This paper presents a brief background on current TCAC practice for decision making and reporting processes, and then identifies two options for future practice. The purpose of this paper and the proposed TCAC14 discussion is to clarify processes and expectations and ensure that all decisions are fully understood when adopted, and that subsequent reporting is accurate, sufficiently informative, and efficient.
2. The current practice for TCAC is to adopt reports through email correspondence. This reflects broader post-COVID practice for the IOTC and its technical committees. Previous attempts to adopt reports at the meeting became difficult as meetings used all available time to conclude negotiations, leaving little time available for clearing reports. Virtual meetings are additionally challenged due to their more limited time and inherent communication challenges. Rather than extend meetings by an additional day, reports were cleared by correspondence.
3. In order to ensure accurate reporting, the secretariat record TCAC negotiations then prepare a draft report based on the audio recording and notes taken by the Executive Secretary. This draft is then provided to the Chair who then reviews and revises according to their own notes.
4. Unlike some other RFMOs, the IOTC does not retain a rapporteur, so the Secretary and Chair must both take notes and manage the meeting. This presents challenges during busy discussions when multiple speakers raise their flags.
5. At TCAC13, the Chair presented regular updates on the outcomes of discussions on-screen, summarising agreement on key points. At the conclusion of negotiations, the chair presented a final summary of the agreed key points on-screen for the TCAC13.
6. The Executive Secretary and the Chair also prepared a written summary of recommendations that was circulated overnight for review, and was then discussed, revised and adopted on the final day of the TCAC13. This was included verbatim in the final report given that it had already been cleared by TCAC13.
7. A draft report was then emailed by the secretariat to heads of delegation with a request for feedback within 1 week. A subsequent revision was distributed, requesting comments only on the revised paragraphs noting that all other paragraphs had not received any comments and were therefore considered to be adopted.

8. Some concerns were expressed that the clearing of reports via correspondence puts a disproportionate burden on developing coastal States with small fisheries departments, and hence, an extension was granted to all CPCs so as to ensure fairness.
9. 2nd and 3rd revisions were subsequently distributed, again requesting that CPCs only comment on the revised paragraphs, noting that all other paragraphs had not received any comments were therefore considered to be adopted.
10. A 4th revision will be distributed in January, noting that the report has been revised in response to comments on revisions only – as advised previously – and only comments on the new revisions in track changes will be considered as all other paragraphs are considered to be adopted given that no further comments had been received on these other paragraphs.

Options for TCAC14 Consideration

11. Following some concerns expressed by CPCs on the current process, and the multiple number of revisions, the Chair proposes that the TCAC14 clarify how it wishes to record decisions and adopt reports. The Chair proposes that TCAC14 discuss two options, revising if necessary.

OPTION 1 – The secretariat and TCAC Chair prepare an outcomes summary document towards the end of the meeting which summarises all agreed points that will guide future negotiations. This summary should include all points that are generally reported as **AGREED** in TCAC reports. A draft of this document is distributed overnight for review and discussion on the final day at in-person meetings or presented on-screen during the final session of virtual meetings. Following review and adoption of the summary of outcomes, the TCAC concludes and then adopts the full meeting report via email correspondence.

The secretariat prepares the full meeting report based on its audio recording and notes, seeking review and input from the Chair. A draft of the report is distributed to heads of delegation for comment, providing a minimum of 2 weeks for CPCs to adequately review the report. If subsequent revisions are required, then CPCs are provided with 2 weeks again to review the report. If delegations are unable to provide feedback within the 2 week timeframe, then they can request an extension before the deadline which must then be granted equally to all CPCs. If no extension is requested, then no further comments may be accepted after the deadline. If comments are only received on some paragraphs, then all other paragraphs are considered to be adopted for the next revision and are closed to further revision.

OPTION 2 – The TCAC retains a rapporteur to prepare a full report while the meeting proceeds. A draft of the report is distributed overnight for review and discussion on the final day at in-person meetings or presented on-screen during the final session of virtual meetings. Note, this implies that discussions must finish on the second last day of the in-person meetings, leaving the final day free for report adoption. If the TCAC is unable to adopt the report before the close of the meeting, then the review process continues via email correspondence through the same process as described above.