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# Report of the 14<sup>th</sup> Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria

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Held by videoconference, 6 – 7 February 2025

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**DISTRIBUTION:**

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**ACRONYMS**

AFAD	Anchored fish aggregating device
BMSY	Biomass which produces MSY
CMM	Conservation and Management Measure
CNCP	Cooperating Non-Contracting Party, of the IOTC
CoC	Compliance Committee of the IOTC
CPs	Contracting Parties
CPCs	Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties
DCS	Developing Coastal State
DFAD	Drifting fish aggregating device
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FAD	Fish aggregating device
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMSY	Fishing mortality at MSY
HCR	Harvest control rule
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated
LRP	Limit reference point
LSTLV	Large-scale tuna longline vessel
MSE	Management Strategy Evaluation
NCP	Non-Contracting Party
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OT	Overseas Territories
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
SC	Scientific Committee of the IOTC
SCAF	Standing Committee on Administration and Finance of the IOTC
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
TCAC	Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria of the IOTC
TCMP	Technical Committee on Management Procedures
TRP	Target referent point
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System

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## HOW TO INTERPRET TERMINOLOGY CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT

This report uses the following terms and associated definitions.

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.

Level 3: General terms to be used for consistency:

**AGREED:** Any point of discussion from a meeting which the IOTC body considers to be an agreed course of action covered by its mandate, which has not already been dealt with under Level 1 or level 2 above; a general point of agreement among delegations/participants of a meeting which does not need to be considered/adopted by the next level in the Commission's structure.

**NOTED/NOTING:** Any point of discussion from a meeting which the IOTC body considers to be important enough to record in a meeting report for future reference.

**Any other term:** Any other term may be used in addition to the Level 3 terms to highlight to the reader of an IOTC report, the importance of the relevant paragraph. However, other terms used are considered for explanatory/informational purposes only and shall have no higher rating within the reporting terminology hierarchy than Level 3, described above (e.g. **CONSIDERED; URGED; ACKNOWLEDGED**).

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACRONYMS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>HOW TO INTERPRET TERMINOLOGY CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. Opening of the Session .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2. Letters of credentials and admission of observers .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Adoption of the Agenda and arrangements for the session.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4. Workplan.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5. Terms of reference.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6. Adoption of decision and reports .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7. Other Business.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7.1. Adoption of the report of the TCAC13 .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8. Adoption Of Report .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Appendix 1. List of Participants.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Appendix 2. Adopted agenda of the 14<sup>th</sup> Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Appendix 3. List of Documents.....</b>	<b>15</b>

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The 14th Session of the Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria (TCAC14) was held by videoconference, from 6 to 7 February 2025. The meeting was opened by and chaired by the Independent TCAC Chairperson, Mr Quentin Hanich.

The meeting was held by videoconference.

Letters of Credentials were received from 18 Contracting Parties. Two NGOs participated in the meeting along with the Invited Experts.

(Para. 10) Following discussions, the TCAC **AGREED** to the general contents of the workplan and **RECOMMENDED** that it be endorsed by the Commission. The workplan is attached as Appendix 4. The TCAC **NOTED** that adjustments to the timelines may be necessary.

(Para. 12) The TCAC **RECOMMENDED** that given the nature of the discussions and the significance volume of work to be completed in TCAC15 and TCAC16, meetings be held in-person with hybrid support if possible. The TCAC **NOTED** that having additional in-person meetings of the TCAC would place a burden on delegations to attend as well as have potential budgetary implications in facilitating member attendance

## 1. OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The 14th Session of the Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria (TCAC14) was held by videoconference, from 6 to 7 February 2025. The meeting was opened by and chaired by the Independent TCAC Chairperson, Mr Quentin Hanich.
2. The Chair opened the meeting with an acknowledgment of participants, including government representatives and the secretariat, for their commitment and support. The Chair emphasized the importance of cooperation in managing Indian Ocean tuna fisheries, given their transboundary nature, and stressed the need for consensus in decision-making.
3. The Chair urged delegates to prioritize long-term shared interests over short-term national perspectives, embracing flexibility and collective solutions to ensure the sustainability of fisheries. He noted that the adoption and implementation of resolutions requires joint ownership across jurisdictions, including flag, coastal, port, and market States.
4. Lastly the Chair stated that a package deal approach was highlighted as necessary for consensus, with compromises expected in achieving an agreement. Delegations were requested to keep interventions concise, with an opportunity provided for opening statements before proceeding with administrative matters.

## 2. LETTERS OF CREDENTIALS AND ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS

5. Letters of Credentials were received from 18 Contracting Parties. The list of participants is provided in [Appendix 1](#).
6. Pursuant to Article VII of the IOTC Agreement and Rule XIV of the IOTC Rules of Procedure, the Commission admitted the following observers:

*Non-governmental organizations having special competence in the field of activity of the Commission:*

- South West Indian Ocean Tuna Forum
- Sustainable Fisheries and Communities Trust

*Invited consultants and experts:*

- Invited Experts

## 3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION

7. The Chairperson provided an overview of the agenda for the meeting and noted the following documents ([Appendix 2](#)):
  - A draft workplan for the TCAC (IOTC-2025-TCAC14-03);
  - A document on decision making and reporting for the TCAC (IOTC-2025-TCAC14-04).
8. The TCAC **ADOPTED** the agenda provided in [Appendix 3](#).

## 4. WORKPLAN

9. The Chairperson made a presentation, summarising the content of the Draft Workplan provided in document IOTC-2025-TCAC03.
10. Following discussions, the TCAC **AGREED** to the general contents of the workplan and **RECOMMENDED** that it be endorsed by the Commission. The workplan is attached as Appendix 4. The TCAC **NOTED** that adjustments to the timelines may be necessary.
11. The TCAC **NOTED** interventions by some members that expressed their concern over the vagueness of the task listed as “Biomass/EEZ and proxies”
12. The TCAC **RECOMMENDED** that given the nature of the discussions and the significance volume of work to be completed in TCAC15 and TCAC16, meetings be held in-person with hybrid support if possible. The TCAC **NOTED** that having additional in-person meetings of the TCAC would place a burden on delegations to attend as well as have potential budgetary implications in facilitating member attendance.

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13. The TCAC **NOTED** that the Commission should be made aware of these extra meetings and take them into consideration when discussing the annual meeting calendar to mitigate the concentration of meetings at certain periods of a the year.

## 5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

14. The TCAC **AGREED** to continue working under its current arrangements and not to task the chair to prepare a Terms of Reference (ToRs). The TCAC **NOTED** that CPCs retained the option to table their own proposals for a ToRs of the TCAC.

## 6. ADOPTION OF DECISION AND REPORTS

15. The Chairperson made a presentation, summarising the rationale for document IOTC-2025-TCAC04 as well as the suggested options to proceed.
16. The TCAC **DISCUSSED** options to improve the preparation, review and adoption of TCAC reports. The TCAC **AGREED** to prepare and adopt in-person reports in session. The TCAC **AGREED** that it will utilise the collective rapporteuring of the Chair, Vice-Chairs and Secretariat to keep track of the discussions held during the meeting. Each day, after the final session for the day has finished, the Chair, Vice-Chairs and Secretariat will meet to discuss and agree on the main actionable items, agreements and decisions taken by the TCAC during that day. This text will be agreed by these rapporteurs and distributed by the Secretariat to all participants each evening. The participants will then be given an opportunity to comment on this text each following day. On the final evening, all the agreed text will be compiled into a succinct report that will be adopted on the final day of the TCAC meeting, ensuring that the report is adopted during the session and circulated shortly after the TCAC meeting has ended.
17. The TCAC **AGREED** that reports from virtual TCAC meetings will be cleared intersessionally through email correspondence.

## 7. OTHER BUSINESS

### 7.1. Adoption of the report of the TCAC13

18. The TCAC discussed the outstanding issues related to the TCAC13 report and **AGREED** to its adoption.

## 8. ADOPTION OF REPORT

19. The report of the 14th Session of the Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria (IOTC–2025–TCAC14–R) was **ADOPTED** by correspondence.



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**APPENDIX 2.**  
**ADOPTED AGENDA OF THE 14<sup>TH</sup> TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON ALLOCATION CRITERIA**

**Date:** 6 - 7 February, 2025

**Location:** Virtual - Zoom

**Time:** 11h00 – 15h00 hours, daily

**Chairperson:** Mr Quentin Hanich

1. **OPENING OF THE SESSION**
2. **LETTERS OF CREDENTIALS AND ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS**
3. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION**
4. **WORKPLAN**
5. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**
6. **ADOPTION OF DECISION AND REPORTS**
7. **OTHER BUSINESS**
8. **ADOPTION OF REPORT**

**APPENDIX 3.**  
**LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

All documents are available on the IOTC website [\[click here\]](#)

<b>Document number</b>	<b>Title</b>
IOTC-2025-TCAC14-01a	Draft agenda
IOTC-2025-TCAC14-02	List of documents
IOTC-2025-TCAC14-03	Draft TCAC Workplan
IOTC-2025-TCAC14-04	TCAC Decision Making and Reporting

**APPENDIX 4.**  
**TCAC WORKPLAN – 2025-2027**

1. This workplan was **AGREED** at a virtual meeting of TCAC14, 6-7 February 2025. TCAC14 **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission endorse the workplan at its 29<sup>th</sup> Session in April 2025.
2. The workplan includes a number of requests and recommendations that were **AGREED** at TCAC13 in October 2024. These include:
  - a. The TCAC **REQUESTED** the WPDCS provide advice on applicability of available catch estimation methodologies to account for artisanal catch history in IOTC CPCs that have been unable to monitor and report artisanal fisheries. The TCAC **ENCOURAGED** all CPCs with artisanal catch histories to attend the upcoming WPDCS.
  - b. **NOTING** the ongoing challenges for some IOTC CPCs to adequately monitor and record artisanal fishing effort and catch, TCAC **REQUESTS** the WPDCS to identify the current gaps in data collection and for the WPICMM to review capacity needs in CPCs on the basis of their input and **RECOMMENDS** that the Commission consider developing an integrated capacity building strategy to build resilient and enduring fisheries monitoring and data reporting systems and domestic expertise for IOTC developing CPCs, and expand catch estimation methods at State and regional levels. This strategy should include consideration of funding grant opportunities for regional programs, such as the Global Environment Facility and other global funders.
  - c. **NOTING** that the spatial granularity of the 5° grid area set in IOTC Resolution 15/02 (para. 4) for catch data from longline fisheries hampers accurate estimation of catch distribution between EEZs and High Seas, the TCAC **ENCOURAGES** CPCs with longline fisheries to provide geo-referenced catch data by species from longline fisheries to be reported in weight by 1° grid area and monthly strata or finer scale if available.
  - d. The TCAC **REQUESTED** that the SC assess whether, and according to which methodology, spatial distribution of stock biomass can be estimated between High Seas and the EEZ (and between EEZs) for integration into the allocation process.
  - e. TCAC **REQUESTED** CPCs cooperate with the secretariat as it prepares an information paper that estimates catches taken by one CPC (or non-CPC) in another CPC's EEZ which may be subject to catch attribution questions. In order to support this study, TCAC reiterated the importance for CPCs to provide relevant information to the secretariat as covered in Resolution 14/05 or operational data to enable accurate distribution of catch across overlapping HS/EEZ boundaries. The Chairperson then confirmed the simulations and information papers that would be developed for the upcoming meeting of the TCAC15.
3. TCAC13 also **AGREED** that the following simulations and information papers should be developed for TCAC15, and thus require inclusion in the TCAC workplan.
  - a. The TCAC **REQUESTED** the secretariat to prepare an information paper that summarises any data gaps in the information reported by CPCs to the IOTC and the level of estimation of CPCs catches over time.
  - b. The TCAC **REQUESTED** the secretariat to prepare an information paper, based on SC advice, on potential proxies for fisheries productivity and artisanal catch history for inclusion in allocation catch history criteria calculations (eg. biomass, EEZ/or territorial sea size, catches by CPCs fishing in other CPCs EEZs, market studies, and other applicable factors) with explanation on how and why these proxies are related to catch history.
  - c. The TCAC **REQUESTED** the Secretariat to produce an information Table that presents catch histories for all CPCs from 1950-2023. This will allow CPCs to compare all catch histories for all CPCs.



Reference year options shall include those that have previously been considered in TCAC discussions.

- d. The TCAC **REQUESTED** the chair to prepare an information paper that describes existing RFMO policies and practices for the transfers of species quotas between CPCs. The information paper will also include discussion of potential frameworks for the TCAC to regulate transfers of species quota between CPCs, including both transferring surplus quota from one CPC to another, and transferring between CPCs of surplus species quota for surplus quota of another species.
  - e. The TCAC **REQUESTED** the chair to prepare an information paper that explores options for the attribution of catch history for CPCs fishing in the EEZ of other CPCs. The paper shall include options of transition periods and other options to address and balance coastal CPC and flag CPC concerns.
  - f. The TCAC **REQUESTED** the chair to prepare an information paper that describes jurisdictional practice for tuna RFMOs, focusing on the compatible management of migratory tunas in both high seas and EEZs, and their consideration of the sovereign rights of coastal States, REIO CPCs with an EEZ, and the avoidance of a disproportionate burden of conservation on developing States.
4. The draft workplan builds on discussions at TCAC13 and TCAC14 and proposes a number of connected tasks and decision points that all ultimately feed into a package deal and resolution. It is expected that delegations will need to consider the package as a whole, and necessarily compromise on some details in order to achieve an agreement. Participation and ownership will be critical – all delegations must own the resolution for it to be successful, recognising that all CPCs must fully implement the resolution through their national processes, and trust that others will also do so.
  5. The workplan is intended to clarify the process of negotiation, and assist CPCs to engage and monitor progress. This is a working document and will be updated regularly to incorporate feedback on information and advisory needs.
  6. Some decisions will need to be agreed in-principle, pending satisfactory decisions on other related matters. For example, a decision on catch attribution may only be acceptable for some CPCs if a decision on the transition framework maintains fleet stability. In order to move forward, the TCAC needs to understand these connections and progress negotiations, recording tentative agreements in-principle where required, and avoiding stalemates and gridlocks where nothing can be agreed.
  7. The workplan proposes that the TCAC first find agreement on the criteria framework and key details before resuming negotiations on a resolution text. The workplan also provides time for TCAC15 to consider how it wishes to draft the resolution text, when ready, and determine a drafting process that ensures all interests are considered – whether through the independent chair and ongoing consultations, or through informal or formal groups.

Task	2025		2026		2027
	TCAC14	TCAC15	TCAC16	TCAC17	TCAC18
<b>Species for allocation</b>		- Discuss & agree single/multiple resolution structure.		- Discuss recommendation on other species	- Agree recommendation on other species
<b>Decision making and reporting</b>	- Chair proposes options for confirming decisions and clearing reports. - Discuss & agree process for confirming decisions and clearing reports. - Discuss & agree if ToR are required.				
<b>TCAC workplan</b>	- Chair proposes draft workplan. - Discuss & agree workplan.	- Update information needs.	- Update workplan and information needs.	- Update information needs.	
<b>Criteria framework</b>		- Discuss criteria framework (i.e catch history, baseline, special requirements). Agree criteria framework in-principle, pending related agreement on attribution, biomass, transition and jurisdiction.	- Agree criteria framework, including related attribution, biomass, transition and jurisdiction.		

Task	TCAC14	TCAC15	TCAC16	TCAC17	TCAC18
<b>Catch attribution</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sec summarises CPC data gaps / estimation level trends.</li> <li>- Sec estimates catches taken by foreign flags (i.e one CPC or non-CPC in another CPC's EEZ).</li> <li>- Chair presents paper on catch attribution options, transition periods, and options to balance coastal and flag CPC concerns.</li> <li>- Discuss principles and steps to attribute catch history.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss and agree on principles and attribution of catch history.</li> </ul>		
<b>Biomass, EEZ size and proxies</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sec presents on potential proxies for fisheries productivity and artisanal catch history for inclusion in allocation catch history criteria calculations with explanation on how and why these proxies are related to catch history.</li> <li>- Discuss biomass, EEZ size and other proxies, and identify which (if any) will be included TCAC16 agenda for decision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SC presents advice on methodology and estimation of spatial distribution of stock biomass between High Seas and EEZs (and between EEZs) for integration into the allocation process. The SC advice will also consider the cost and practicability of biomass studies for all EEZs.</li> <li>- WPDCS advises on catch estimation methodologies to account for artisanal catch history in CPCs that have been unable to monitor and report artisanal fisheries.</li> <li>- Agree how biomass, EEZ size and other proxies will be included (if at all) in allocation framework.</li> </ul>		
<b>Jurisdiction</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chair presents paper on tRFMO jurisdictional practice, focusing on compatible management, sovereign rights, and the avoidance of a disproportionate burden on developing States.</li> <li>- Discuss jurisdiction of allocation regime across territorial, archipelagic, high seas, EEZs and identify pathway for agreement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss &amp; agree on jurisdiction.</li> </ul>		

<b>Task</b>	<b>TCAC14</b>	<b>TCAC15</b>	<b>TCAC16</b>	<b>TCAC17</b>	<b>TCAC18</b>
<b>Reference Years</b>		- Sec presents catch histories for all CPCs from 1950-2023. - Discuss ref. year options	- Agree on reference years		
<b>Transfers</b>		- Chair presents transfers paper - Discuss principles for transfers	- Discuss & agree on framework for transferability.		
<b>Transition</b>		- Discuss transition objectives, mechanism and timescale.	- Agree transition framework.		
<b>Special requirements of developing States</b>		- Discuss chair's papers and mechanisms for addressing special requirements. - Discuss quota distribution methods and indicators. - Instruct chair and sec (and WPDCS?) on information needs to agree on quota distribution method and indicators.	- Discuss & agree on allocation framework to address special requirements of developing States.		
<b>Baseline</b>		- Discuss & agree application of baseline (i.e who gets a share)			
<b>Criteria weightings</b>			- Sec presents updated simulations. - Discuss & advise sec on refinements to simulations.	- Sec presents updated simulations. - Discuss & advise sec on refinements to simulations. - Discuss % weightings assigned to each framework principle. - Discuss whether individual species require individual weightings and if so, how to assign weightings.	- Sec presents final estimations. - Agree % weightings for each framework principle.
<b>Compliance and Capacity Building</b>		- Discuss and agree whether compliance should be considered as an allocation criterion/adjustment mechanism. - If compliance is agreed to be an appropriate criterion, identify principles and mechanisms.	- If previously agreed, discuss and agree principles and mechanisms for consideration of compliance in allocation framework.	- Discuss compliance monitoring scheme and capacity building needs. - Discuss if capacity building recommendation to IOTC is required.	- Agree compliance scheme and connections (if any) to capacity building strategy.

Task	TCAC14	TCAC15	TCAC16	TCAC17	TCAC18
<b>New entrants</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chair presents options paper on new entrants.</li> <li>- Discuss options for new entrants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss &amp; agree on approach for new entrants.</li> </ul>
<b>Review</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss &amp; agree on review options.</li> </ul>	
<b>Resolution and package</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chair to present visualisation and decision tree that prioritises and maps critical elements and criteria.</li> <li>- Discuss &amp; agree on process for drafting resolution (i.e chair, working group, etc).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction of draft resolution structure.</li> <li>- Discuss &amp; agree on resolution structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction of draft resolution.</li> <li>- Discuss and refine draft resolution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss &amp; agree full resolution.</li> <li>- Agree recommendation to IOTC.</li> </ul>