

29 October 2025

IOTC CIRCULAR

2025–33

Dear Madam / Sir

INVITATION TO THE 16TH MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON ALLOCATION CRITERIA 3 – 6 FEBRUARY 2026

I have the honour to extend to you an invitation to participate in the upcoming 16th meeting of the Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria (TCAC16).

The meeting will be held in Perth, Australia at the [Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre](#), which is located close to the Central Business District in Perth, Western Australia.

Meeting will be held in a hybrid format

The meeting will allow for physical participation and participation by videoconference.

Please note, the numbers of people able to participate in-person are yet to be ascertained and will depend on the venue size. You will be advised of any restrictions as soon as possible.

Meeting Participation fund (for developing Contracting Party Members only)

The participation of one representative from developing contracting parties of the IOTC may be supported through the IOTC Meeting Participation Fund (MPF). The applications for the MPF, must be received by the IOTC Secretariat (iotc-secretariat@fao.org) no later than 60 days before the start of the meeting (i.e. 5 December 2025). NOTE – this 60-day deadline will be strictly enforced.

Applications must include:

- i) an official nomination letter
- ii) the contact details of the nominee (with a copy of his/her passport).

The rules of procedure for the administration of the MPF as well as guidelines for applying to the MPF can be found in Appendix VIII of the IOTC Rules of Procedure (click [here](#)). Please be reminded that there is no provision in the IOTC Rules of Procedure (2025) for the IOTC Secretariat to consider late applications.

Credentials

In accordance with Rule III of the IOTC Rules of Procedure (2025), official credentials are required to participate in the meetings. For your convenience, a draft letter of credentials (from Appendix I of the IOTC Rules of Procedure, 2025) is available [here](#).

Contracting Parties & Cooperating Non-contracting Parties (CPCs)

Rule III.1 of the IOTC Rules of Procedure states: “Such Letter of Credentials shall conform to the standard set out in Appendix I.” Please also refer to [IOTC Circular 2021-49](#) on the content of Credentials.

The Credentials are requested to be sent no later than 15 days before each meeting to iotc-secretariat@fao.org. Only credentialed individuals will receive a Zoom link to join the meetings.

Invited Experts and Observers

Distribution

IOTC Contracting Parties: Australia, Bangladesh, China, Comoros, European Union, France (Territories), India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Rep of), Japan, Kenya, Rep. of Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, United Rep. of Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom, Yemen. **Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties:** Liberia, Panama. **Intergovernmental Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations. Chairperson IOTC. Copy to:** FAO Headquarters, FAO Representatives to CPCs.

This message has been transmitted by email only

IOTC Observers and Invited Experts are also requested to submit a similar Letter of Credentials. The credentials should also include the email address and contact phone number for each recipient. Credentials are requested no later than 15 days before each meeting to iotc-secretariat@fao.org.

Calendar of important dates for TCAC16

Dates	TCAC16	Who	Notes
5 December 2025	Deadline for receiving applications for the Meeting Participation Fund	Eligible CPs	60 days before the meeting
4 January 2026	Provisional agenda posted on the TCAC15 web page	Secretariat / Chair	30 days before the meeting
19 January 2026	Deadline for receiving Credentials	All	15 days before the meeting
3 February 2026	Opening of the meeting	All	

Further information

Information concerning the meeting, including the agenda and other meeting documents will be posted on the IOTC website at the TCAC16 meeting page [\[click here\]](#).

Yours sincerely

Quentin Hanich



TCAC Chairperson

ANNEX I: Letter from the TCAC Chair

Friday 24th October 2025

Dear Colleagues,

I hope this finds you all well. As requested by TCAC15, I have begun informal consultations with CPCs and encourage all CPCs to email me to schedule a virtual meeting. I am available for virtual meetings throughout November and am flexible with timing (7am-7pm Sydney time or AEDT). Please email me at quentinhanich@gmail.com with your preferred dates and times. For those who are attending WCPFC from 1-5 December, I can also meet in-person in Manila on the sidelines of WCPFC.

I am keen to use these informal consultations to explore potential pathways to achieve an agreement, before I finalise the agenda and papers for TCAC16. We are now truly focused on the 'hard part' of any allocation regime – the core issues. If we can resolve these core issues, we can draft a resolution. If we do not make satisfactory progress on substantive issues, we will need to consider the future of the TCAC. It is important that all delegations prepare for TCAC16 with a brief that provides a mandate for substantive discussion and allows for in-principle agreement on key issues, pending a final package deal.

With that in mind, I would like to thank CPCs for the compromises and flexibility shown to-date. We have made important progress on key issues, including (among other things):

- Agreement on the development of a package deal, structured around three criteria:
 - o baseline
 - o catch history
 - o special requirements of developing States
- Agreement to focus the first allocation resolution on five principal species (yellowfin, bigeye, skipjack, albacore and swordfish) and defer consideration of neritic tunas and other species to a subsequent resolution.
- Agreement on a comprehensive workplan, with specific timelines.
- Agreement to allow temporary transfers of surplus quota between CPs, and between species, in a manner that does not impact on long term allocation rights.
- Agreement that compliance is fundamental to the successful implementation of an allocation regime.

- Agreement to focus TCAC16 negotiations on two options for the attribution of catch history from foreign vessels fishing within a coastal State's EEZ, described in Appendix 6 of the TCAC15 report.
- General agreement to include EEZs, noting that further negotiation is required regarding the definition and inclusion/exclusion of artisanal fisheries, and general recognition that some form of agreement on the use of a biomass indicator such as EEZ size, in place of catch history in some circumstances, is necessary in order to ensure the inclusion of all EEZs. I also note views that the inclusion of EEZs is contingent on a satisfactory catch attribution resolution.

In order to inform CPCs for TCAC16, I have requested that the secretariat update the simulation tool so that it reflects the three agreed criteria: baseline, catch history, special requirements of developing States.

Given that we have not yet agreed on how catch history will be attributed, I have requested the secretariat to include a sliding scale for this criterion so that CPCs can view alternative simulations for the attribution of catch history from foreign fishing vessels in coastal State's EEZs. Due to the ongoing weaknesses in IOTC catch reporting and its dependence on 5° grid for catch data from longline fisheries, the secretariat will assume that all catch in an overlapping 5° grid was taken on the high seas, unless a coastal State notifies the secretariat that this activity was licensed within its EEZ. I encourage CPCs to notify the secretariat of any relevant information to improve the accuracy of these estimates. I also note the previous statement from TCAC13 encouraging 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.

Given that we have not yet agreed on how to distribute the special requirements quota among developing States, I have suggested to the secretariat that the simulation tool allow for this quota to simply be evenly distributed among all developing States, as defined by the United Nations. This is a temporary approach until TCAC decides otherwise.

In preparation for TCAC16, I have been tasked to prepare a number of papers that discuss:

- options to address artisanal fisheries within the allocation framework.
- options for the allocation criteria to address the special requirements of developing States, including the various components that could be included.
- options on the different baselines that could be included in the allocation framework
- options for assessing and addressing compliance with quota, including guidance on how this is addressed in other RFMOs, and previous discussions held at TCAC.

I plan to circulate these papers in late December, at least 30 days before TCAC16. I will also distribute a draft agenda at this time, based on the agreed workplan. I will then be available throughout January to again consult virtually with delegations prior to TCAC16, so as to ensure that I understand all concerns before TCAC16 begins.

ANNEX I: Letter from the TCAC Chair

Lastly, I note that we still need to elect a second co-vice chair. It is important that we ensure an ongoing balance in this important role, and I invite relevant CPs to consider nominating for this role. I will include this matter in the agenda early so that we can hopefully fill this vacant position before we begin discussions.

I wish you all well and safe travels.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'QH', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Professor Quentin Hanich

Chair - IOTC Technical Committee for Allocation Criteria (TCAC)