

PROGRESS MADE ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUESTS OF WPM15 AND SC27

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT

LAST UPDATED: 04 OCTOBER 2025

PURPOSE

To provide participants at the 16th Working Party on Methods (WPM16) with an update on the progress made in implementing those recommendations from the previous WPM meeting which were endorsed by the Scientific Committee (SC), and to provide alternative recommendations for the consideration and potential endorsement by participants as appropriate given any progress.

BACKGROUND

At the 15th Session of the WPM, 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 WPM was provided to the SC for its endorsement at its meeting in December 2025.

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 16th Session adopted a set of reporting terminology SC16.07 (para. 23), which was subsequently endorsed by the Commission at its 18th 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.

In addition to the Recommendations endorsed by the SC at its 26rd Session, the SC also made several requests which, although are not passed to the Commission for its endorsement, are considered actions which the Scientific Committee has the mandate to issue. The revised recommendations are contained in [Appendix I](#).

RECOMMENDATION

That the WPM **NOTE** the progress made in implementing the recommendations and requests of the 14th Session of the WPM, and consider whether revised recommendations need to be sent to the SC for its consideration.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Progress made on the Recommendations and Requests of WPM14

APPENDIX I

Progress made on the recommendations and requests of WPM15 and SC27

WPM15 Rec. No.	Recommendation from WPM07	SC27 Rec. No.	Recommendation adopted by the SC27
WPM015.01	<i>Review of intersessional meetings related to the IOTC MSE process</i> (Para 14) The WPM THANKED the participants of the Working Party on Methods Management Strategy Evaluation Task Force meeting for their informative discussions and input on the technical aspects of MSE and related topics. The WPM NOTED that the output of this meeting remains very important to the WPM as it provides an informal forum for the highly technical discussions necessary to advance the MSE process in IOTC for which there is insufficient time during the WPM meeting. The WPM further RECOMMENDED that the SC endorse this meeting being included in the schedule of meetings for 2025.		(Para. 126) 126. The SC ENDORSED the inclusion of the MSE task force meeting in the schedule of meetings for 2025.
WPM015.02	<i>Albacore MSE: Update</i> (Para 29) The WPM NOTED that the work of Albacore is not mature enough that would require a TCMP in February and, therefore, RECOMMENDED that an extra TCMP meeting in February 2025 is not organized.	SC27.19	(Para 121) The SC NOTED that the work of albacore is not mature enough that would require a TCMP in February and, therefore, RECOMMENDED that an extra TCMP meeting in February 2025 is not organized
WPM015.03	<i>Bigeye tuna MP (Resolution 22/03)</i> (Para 41) The WPM NOTED that a standardised CPUE index based on the agreed methodology (as per Resolution 22/03) was not yet available to run the Bigeye Tuna MP, but needs to be available in time for the Scientific Committee to review (as required by Resolution 22/03). However, a member of the joint CPUE group responsible for	SC27.20	(Para 122) The SC NOTED that a standardised CPUE index based on the agreed methodology (as per Resolution 22/03) was not yet available to run the Bigeye Tuna MP, but needs to be available in time for the Scientific Committee to review (as required by Resolution 22/03). However, a member of the joint CPUE group responsible for producing the index indicated

	producing the index indicated that logistically (due to the need to have a physical workshop to share the data) it would not be possible to provide the CPUE index in time for SC, but that it might be possible to provide following a meeting of the group in February 2025. The WPM DISCUSSED options for ensuring that the SC is able to review and participate in the running of the MP. Following this discussion, the WPM RECOMMENDED that: - the joint CPUE working group produce a BET CPUE index, as per the requirements/specifications of Williams et al (2022), at its meeting in early February 2025, and provide this for the WPM(MSE)Taskforce. - the WPM(MSE) Taskforce meet online on 24-25 February 2025 with one day to review and run the BET MP and one day to consider progress on the Albacore Tuna MSE. - The Scientific Committee convene a special session, online (for two hours) on 26 February 2025, to review and if appropriate endorse the BET MP run and its associated BET TAC outcomes		that logistically (due to the need to have a physical workshop to share the data) it would not be possible to provide the CPUE index in time for SC, but that it might be possible to provide following a meeting of the group in February 2025. The SC DISCUSSED options for ensuring that the WPM is able to review and participate in the running of the MP. Following this discussion, the SC RECOMMENDED that: - the joint CPUE working group produce a BET CPUE index, as per the requirements/specifications of Williams et al (2022), at its meeting in early February 2025, and provide this for the WPM(MSE)Taskforce. - the WPM(MSE) Taskforce meet online on 24-25 February 2025 with one day to review and run the BET MP and one day to consider progress on the Albacore Tuna MSE. - The Scientific Committee convene a special session, online (for two hours) on 26 February 2025, to review and if appropriate endorse the BET MP run and its associated BET TAC outcomes.	
WPM015.04	<i>Swordfish MP (Resolution 24/08)</i> (Para 52) The WPM RECOMMENDED that the Commission implement a TAC for 2026-2028 for swordfish based on the amended and retuned	SC27.21	(para. 124) The SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission implement a TAC for 2026-2028 for swordfish based on the amended and retuned MP1 if the Commission wishes to ensure that it achieves the current objective in Res 24/08 to be in the Kobe green zone with at	

WPM015.05	MP1 if the Commission wishes to ensure that it achieves the current objective in Res 24/08 to be in the Kobe green zone with at least 60% probability during 2034-2038 period. This would require a minor amendment to the Target CPUE value in Annex I of Res 24/08 from 0.7125 to 0.75. The WPM NOTED that should the Commission continue to implement the current MP1, without retuning, it has a lower probability (54%) of being in the Kobe green zone and higher TAC variability, but otherwise similar performance statistics (Table 1). The TAC derived from running SWO MP1 with or without retuning is 30527 t (i.e. the same and therefore not a severe impact) because the max TAC change constrain is reached in both MPs. (Para 53) Irrespective of the MP chosen by the Commission, the WPM RECOMMENDED that the Commission endorsed the resultant TAC of 30527 t. for swordfish for 2026-2028	SC27.22	least 60% probability during 2034-2038 period. This would require a minor amendment to the Target CPUE value in Annex I of Res 24/08 from 0.7125 to 0.75. The SC NOTED that should the Commission continue to implement the current MP1, without retuning, it has a lower probability (54%) of being in the Kobe green zone and higher TAC variability, but otherwise similar performance statistics (Table 1 of IOTC-204-WPM15-R). The TAC derived from running SWO MP1 with or without retuning is 30527 t (i.e. the same and therefore not a severe impact) because the max TAC change constrain is reached in both MPs. (para 125) Irrespective of the MP chosen by the Commission, the SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission endorse the resultant TAC of 30,527 t for swordfish for 2026-2028.
WPM015.06	General MSE issues (Para 86) The WPM underlined that there is a need to ensure that any code and input files used for developing MPs is housed internally on an accessible platform, so it is available to other users and not lost when developers move on to other tasks. The WPM NOTED that ICES uses a Transparency and Assessment Framework (TAF) which is a useful frontend to direct users to the locations of relevant documents and code (e.g. Github repositories) that enable users to re-run assessments and other analyses, but that a much smaller system would be needed for the IOTC.	SC27.23	(para. 127) The SC ENDORSED the WPM's RECOMMENDATION that the Commission ensure that the IOTC Secretariat is provided with the necessary resources to manage the curation of relevant documents and code to enable users to re-run assessments and other analyses, NOTING that the most important information to be curated would be the input file, executables and control files.

		The WPM NOTED that the most important information to be curated would be the input files, executables, and control files (not the large volume of output files), and RECOMMENDED that the Commission ensure that the IOTC Secretariat is provided with the necessary resources to manage the curation of this information.			
WPM015.07		<i>Revision of the WPM Program of work (2025–2029)</i> (para.116) The WPM RECOMMENDED that the Scientific Committee consider and endorse the WPM Programme of Work (2025–2029), as provided in Appendix IV .			(para. 194) The SC NOTED the proposed Program of Work and priorities for the SC and each of the working parties and AGREED to a consolidated Program of Work as outlined in Appendix 36a-g and in accordance with the IOTC Strategic Science Plan 2020-2024. The Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of each working party will ensure that the efforts of their respective working parties are focused on the core areas contained within the appendix, taking into account any new research priorities identified by the Commission at its next Session.
WPM15.08		<i>Date and place of the 16th and 17th sessions of the WPM</i> (para 118) The WPM RECOMMENDED the SC consider mid-late October 2025 as a preferred time period to hold the WPM16. As usual it was also AGREED that this meeting should continue to be held back-to-back with the WPTT. The Secretariat will continue to liaise with CPCs to determine their interest in hosting these meetings in the future as the SC is encouraging a return to physical meetings since 2023.			Para(204) The SC REQUESTED that the schedule of Working Party and Scientific Committee meetings for 2025 and 2026 provided at Appendix 38 be communicated by the IOTC SC Chairperson to the Commission for its endorsement.

WPM15.09	<i>Review of the draft, and adoption of the Report of the 13th Session of the WPM</i> (para. 120) The WPM RECOMMENDED that the Scientific Committee consider the consolidated set of recommendations arising from WPM15, provided in Appendix V.		
----------	--	--	--

WPM15 Report	WPM15 REQUESTS	Update/Progress
Para. 26	<i>ALBACORE MSE: UPDATE</i> The WPM REQUESTED that the developers present this work to experts on albacore fisheries at the WPTmT, during a special online session.	Update: Completed. An intersessional meeting took place in December 2024 where the developers present this work to experts on albacore fisheries and feedbacks were received.
Para. 33	<i>Skipjack MP (Resolution 24/07)</i> The WPM also NOTED the need to develop the review of consideration of Exceptional Circumstances document (starting from 2025) as required by Resolution 24/07 and REQUEST the WPM Chair to discuss it with the Maldivian and EU teams to find a suitable scientist to perform this analysis to be presented at WPM16. This responsibility of analysing Exceptional Circumstances is discussed further in Section 9 as it is also pertinent to the MP applications for other species.	Update: CPCs to provide update.
Para. 54	<i>Swordfish MP (Resolution 24/08)</i> The WPM NOTED that Res 24/08 specifies that the next swordfish stock assessment will be in 2025, while the assessment schedule for the WPB specifies that the assessment will be done in 2026. The WPM NOTED that assessments for both blue marlin and Indo-Pacific sailfish are scheduled for 2025 and AGREED that there would be no adverse effects on the MP process to postpone the swordfish stock assessment to 2026. The WPM REQUESTED that the WPB maintain the schedule to complete the swordfish stock assessment in 2026	Update: Completed. The SC agreed to maintain the schedule for the swordfish stock assessment in 2026.
Para. 55	The WPM NOTED the request from the WPB to have the opportunity to review exceptional circumstances for the swordfish MP through the	

	presentation of a paper at the annual meeting of the WPB. The WPM REQUESTED that the chair of the WPB (and other relevant WPs) ensure that exceptional circumstances are on the meeting agenda and that scientists are identified prior to the meetings to prepare a paper on exceptional circumstances.	Update: Completed.
Para. 75	General MSE issues The WPM SUGGESTED that CPCs would need to take the lead on the assessment of exceptional circumstances as this task generally required scientific analysis. The Secretariat would liaise with the Working Party Chairs to request this item is included in the annual agenda of the WP and inform CPCs in advance to ensure that this work could be assigned and undertaken.	Update: Completed.
Para. 115	Revision of the WPM Program of work (2025–2029). The WPM REQUESTED that the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the WPM, in consultation with the IOTC Secretariat, develop Terms of Reference (ToR) for each of the projects detailed on the WPM Programme of Work (2025–2029) that are yet to be funded, for circulation to potential funding bodies.	Update: Ongoing.
Para. 117	The WPM reviewed the progress of the MSE work conducted to date, and subject to the comments held in this report, endorsed the MSE conducted thus far and REQUESTED additional work to address the reviewed comments made.	Update: Ongoing. To be presented during the WPM in 2025.