
REVISION OF THE WPM PROGRAM OF WORK (2026–2030)

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 6 OCTOBER 2024

PURPOSE

To ensure that participants at the 16th Working Party on Methods (WPM16) revise the Program of Work for the WPM by taking into consideration the specific requests of the Commission and Scientific Committee.

BACKGROUND

Scientific Committee

At the 27th Session of the SC:

- (Para. 193) *The SC **NOTED** IOTC–2024–SC27–08 which provided the SC with a proposed Program of Work for each of its working parties, including prioritisation of the elements requested by each working party.*
- (Para. 194) *The SC noted the proposed Program of Work and priorities for the Scientific Committee 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 shall ensure that the efforts of their working party 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.*
- (Para. 195) *The SC **AGREED** on the consolidated table of priorities across all Working Parties, as developed by each WP Chair, and **REQUESTED** that the IOTC Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair and vice-Chair of the SC and relevant Working Parties, develop ToRs for the specific projects to be carried out.*

Commission

At Sessions of the Commission, Conservation and Management Measures adopted contained elements that call on the Scientific Committee, via the WPM, to undertake specific tasks. These requests will need to be incorporated into a revised Program of Work for the WPM.

DISCUSSION

Participants at the WPM16 are requested to consider the priorities set by the Commission and the Scientific Committee, via Conservation and Management Measures, and revise its Program of Work to match those priorities.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the WPM:

- 1) **NOTE** paper IOTC–2025–WPM16–07, which encouraged the WPM to further develop and refine its Program of Work for 2026–2030 to align with the requests and directives from the Commission and Scientific Committee.
- 2) **RECOMMEND** a revised Program of Work for 2026–2030 to the Scientific Committee for its consideration and potential endorsement.
- 3) **NOTE** Appendix B (Schedule of work for the development of management procedures for key species in the IOTC area) that has been revised by the WPM and **ENDORSED** by the SC in 2024.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Working Party on Methods Program of Work (2025–2029) – to be updated for 2026 - 2030

Appendix B: Schedule of work for the development of management procedures for key species in the IOTC area.

APPENDIX A
WORKING PARTY ON METHODS PROGRAM OF WORK (2025–2029)

Table 1. Priority topics for obtaining the information necessary to deliver the necessary advice to the Commission. Resolution 15/10 elements have been incorporated as required by the Commission.

Topic	Sub-topic and project	Timing				
		2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
1. Management Strategy Evaluation	Continuation of Management Strategy Evaluation for Albacore and Yellowfin tunas as well as Blue shark					
MP Implementation	Monitoring the implementation of SKJ, BET and SWO Management Procedures					
	Peer review of SKJ/SWO MSE/MPs as required by MP resolutions					
Future Research Requirements (not in order of priority)						
Management Strategy Evaluation	1.1 Albacore					
	1.1.1 Revision of Operating Models based on WPALB, WPM and SC feedback, including possible robustness tests					
	1.1.2 Implementation of simulation runs and presentation of results at the TCMP					
	1.1.3 Revision and evaluation of new set of Management Procedures after presentation of MP runs to TCMP and Commission (as needed)					
1.2 Skipjack tuna						

1.2.1 Run MP using the catch and CPUE standardisation input data, consider exceptional circumstances*, and provide the TAC advice				
1.2.2 Presentation of MP application and exceptional circumstances* and resulting TAC to the TCMP and Commission meeting for adoption of the TAC				
1.2.3 Stock assessment to provide information on stock status				
1.2.4 External peer review (2026-2028)				
1.3 Bigeye tuna				
1.3.1 Run MP using the catch and CPUE standardisation input data, consider exceptional circumstances*, and provide the TAC advice				
1.3.2 External peer review				
1.3.3 Presentation of MP application and exceptional circumstances* and resulting TAC to the TCMP and Commission meeting for adoption of the TAC				
1.3.4 Stock assessment to provide information on stock status				
1.4 Yellowfin tuna				
1.4.1 Update OM & present preliminary MP results to TCMP, WPTT/WPM review of new OM				
1.4.2 Present revised MP results to TCMP; iteratively update development if required)				
1.4.3 additional iterations if required				
1.5 Swordfish				

1.5.1 Run MP using the catch and CPUE standardisation input data, consider exceptional circumstances*, and provide the TAC advice 1.5.2 Presentation of MP application and exceptional circumstances* and resulting TAC to the TCMP and Commission meeting for adoption of the TAC 1.5.3 Stock assessment to provide information on stock status Stock assessment to provide information on stock status 1.5.4 External peer review					
Stock status guidance and reference points. Review IOTC stock status characterization against reference points and the framework for the provision of management advice (Resolution 15/10) to address the TORs of ad hoc reference point WG.					
CKMR pilot project Implementation of a CKMR pilot project for Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna to evaluate the logistics and feasibility of sampling, and levels of cross contamination of DNA.					
Capacity Building Ongoing development of tools, materials and courses to continue Capacity Building for increasing participation in the MSE process and develop improved MSE communication to fishery managers.					

APPENDIX B

SCHEDULE OF WORK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES FOR KEY SPECIES IN THE IOTC AREA

A more detailed explanation of the roles of the Working Parties (WPs), Scientific Committee (SC), Technical Committee on Management Procedures (TCMP) and the Commission are provided below

Schedule of work for the development of management procedures for key species in the IOTC Area

A more detailed explanation of the roles of the Working Parties (WPs), Scientific Committee (SC), Technical Committee on Management Procedures (TCMP) and the Commission are provided below

Year	Albacore	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Swordfish
2024	WPs/SC: Consider recommendations from the Commission and undertake MSE to provide advice on the performance of candidate MPs.	WPs/SC:	WPs/SC: Consider recommendations from the Commission and consider outcomes of the 2024 Yellowfin assessment. Discuss and agree on a plan for further development of MSE and candidate MPs.	WPs/SC: Run BET MP and Review Exceptional Circumstances and agree in any corrective action, if needed. Provide TAC advice to the TCMP and Commission for 2026-2028.	WPs/SC: Run SWO MP and Review Exceptional Circumstances and agree in any corrective action, if needed. Provide TAC advice to the TCMP and Commission for 2026-2028.
2025	TCMP: Provide advice to Commission on elements of OMs and, if possible,	TCMP:	TCMP: Provide advice to Commission on elements of OMs and, if possible,	TCMP:	TCMP:

	candidate MPs, , that require a decision by the Commission, including the performance of candidate MPs against Commission objectives.		candidate MPs, that require a decision by the Commission, including the performance of candidate MPs against Commission objectives.	Provide advice to the Commission on BET TAC for 2026-2028	Provide advice to the Commission on SWO TAC for 2026-2028
	Commission: Consider work and advice from subsidiary bodies and provide direction to the WPs/SC on the need to undertake further MSE of candidate or alternative MPs.	Commission:	Commission: Consider work and advice from subsidiary bodies and provide direction to the WPs/SC on the need to undertake further MSE.	Commission: Adopt the TAC for 2026-2028	Commission: Adopt the TAC for 2026-2028
	WPs/SC: Consider recommendations from the Commission and undertake MSE to provide advice on the performance of candidate MPs.	WPs/SC: Run the SKJ MP and Review Exceptional Circumstances. Provide advice to the Commission on SKJ TAC for 2027-2029	WPs/SC: Consider recommendations from the Commission and undertake MSE to provide advice on the performance of candidate MPs.	WPs/SC: Consider outcomes of BET MSE review and provide advice to TCMP/Commission. Stock Assessment to monitor MP implementation Review Exceptional Circumstances	WPs/SC: Review Exceptional Circumstances
2026	TCMP: Provide advice to Commission on elements of candidate MPs, and any proposed Resolutions for an	TCMP: Provide advice to the Commission on SKJ TAC for 2027-2029	TCMP: Provide advice to Commission on elements of candidate MPs, and any proposed Resolutions for an	TCMP: Provide advice to Commission on the	TCMP:

	MP, that require a decision by the Commission, including the performance of candidate MPs against Commission objectives.		MP, that require a decision by the Commission, including the performance of candidate MPs against Commission objectives.	outcomes of the BET MSE peer-review	
	Commission: Consider work and advice from subsidiary bodies. Decision and adoption of an MP.	Commission: Adopt the TAC for 2027-2029	Commission: Consider work and advice from subsidiary bodies and provide direction to the WPs/SC on the need to undertake further MSE of candidate or alternative MPs.	Commission: Consider advice from subsidiary bodies on the outcomes of the BET MSE review and provide direction to WP/SC, if required.	Commission:
	WPs/SC: Consider recommendations from the Commission	WPs/SC: Stock Assessment to monitor MP implementation Review Exceptional Circumstances	WPs/SC: Consider recommendations from the Commission and undertake MSE to provide advice on the performance of candidate MPs.	WPs/SC: Consider recommendations from the Commission (if any). Review Exceptional Circumstances	WPs/SC: Stock Assessment to monitor MP implementation Review Exceptional Circumstances
2027	TCMP:	TCMP:	TCMP: Provide advice to Commission on elements of candidate MPs, and any proposed Resolutions for an MP, that require a decision by the Commission, including the performance of candidate MPs against Commission objectives.	TCMP:	TCMP:

	Commission:	Commission:	Commission: Consider work and advice from subsidiary bodies. Decision and adoption of an MP.	Commission:	Commission:
	WPs/SC: Review Exceptional Circumstances	WPs/SC: Review Exceptional Circumstances	WPs/SC: Consider recommendations from the Commission	WPs/SC: Review Exceptional Circumstances. Run BET MP and provide TAC advice to TCMP and Commission for 2029-2031.	WPs/SC: Review Exceptional Circumstances Run SWO MP and provide TAC advice to TCMP and Commission for 2029-2031.