
TCAC 17 Chair's Explanatory Memo

20 August 2026

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you are all well and look forward to seeing you online soon for TCAC17 in October.

I have prepared a draft agenda for TCAC17 for your consideration which you may find at <https://iotc.org/meetings/17th-meeting-technical-committee-allocation-criteria-tcac>. I would like to provide some explanatory comments and then like to invite you to provide feedback, either through a virtual meeting with me in the next 6 weeks, by email to me at quentinhanich@gmail.com, or through your own delegation papers.

As discussed at IOTC30 in Male, TCAC17 will meet virtually and determine if a revised workplan is possible, focusing on the resolution of key foundational matters. During IOTC30 discussions, there was general support to suspend negotiations on criteria and focus on resolving foundational matters that are necessary for an allocation framework.

While it is clear that we lack consensus, most members appeared accepting of a proposal to substantially revise and update the workplan to focus future TCAC meetings on only two balanced matters at each meeting, with the objective that each future meeting must recommend a resolution for IOTC consideration, and each resolution must contribute to the effectiveness of IOTC more broadly on a pathway towards allocation.

During these discussions, I displayed a slide that presented a non-exclusive list of potential foundation priorities that required agreement as pre-requisites for any subsequent allocation framework. These included:

- Jurisdiction
- Treatment of Artisanal Fisheries
- Attribution of Catch History from Foreign Vessels in EEZ
- Indicators for Measuring Fishing Interest (i.e catch history, biomass/EEZ size, etc)
- Transferability Framework
- Data Gaps – Artisanal and High Seas
- Capacity Building

I suggest that we focus TCAC17 workplan discussions on the prioritisation of foundational matters that are pre-requisites for any subsequent allocation framework,

and we then identify two 'balanced' priorities for discussion at an in-person TCAC18, gratefully noting the offer from India to host this meeting in early February.

I note the divergent views of many delegations on the details of an allocation framework and the general exhaustion with this process. While my own experience is limited to the past two years, I can see that it has been a difficult 15 years for many individuals and delegations. I note a call for the TCAC to negotiate draft text but have no mandate to produce that text nor do I see any consensus on the key terms. I hear the views of many members that an ongoing failure to resolve these allocation issues risk undermining confidence in the Commission and creates uncertainty and inequity, particularly for coastal developing States and small island developing States.

I share your frustrations – this is a complex, difficult and critically important matter. Success will only be reached through reluctant and difficult compromise.

So, we are clearly now at a crossroads. If TCAC17 can virtually agree on the foundational priorities for an allocation framework and agree on two balanced priorities for discussion at TCAC18 - then we have a step forward. This will effectively provide the agenda for an in-person TCAC18 which must then conclude with a recommendation for IOTC31.

If TCAC17 cannot agree, effectively on its own agenda, then I can only recommend that the TCAC be dissolved and the IOTC explore other pathways to resolving the equitable distribution of fishing opportunities and ensuring the long-term sustainable future of these critical fisheries.

In the meantime, I seek your feedback on the foundational priorities for an allocation framework, and the two 'balanced' matters that should be our focus for TCAC18. I encourage you to contact me if you would like to organise a virtual meeting, email me if you would prefer to provide a written response, or submit a delegation paper to the meeting website. I will then distribute a revised workplan in early October.

My hope is that TCAC17 will make significant progress and I am committed to serving you through to IOTC31.

I wish you all well and safe travels.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Quentin Hanich

Chair - IOTC Technical Committee for Allocation Criteria (TCAC)