

PROGRESS MADE ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUESTS OF WPM16 AND SC28

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PURPOSE

To provide participants at the 17th Working Party on Methods (WPM17) 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 17th 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 2026.

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 28th 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 16th 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 WPM16

APPENDIX I

Progress made on the recommendations and requests of WPM16 and SC28

WPM16 Rec. No.	Recommendation from WPM16	SC28 Rec. No.	Recommendation adopted by the SC28
WPM016.01	Review of intersessional meetings related to the IOTC MSE process (Para 11): 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 the inclusion of this meeting in the schedule of meetings for 2026.		(Para. 205) The SC NOTED the informative discussions and input on the technical aspects of MSE and related topics by the Working Party on Methods Management Strategy Evaluation Task Force meeting. The SC 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 SC ENDORSED the inclusion of this meeting in the schedule of meetings for early 2026.
WPM016.02	Skipjack tuna MP (Resolution 24/07) (Para 40): The WPM NOTED The application of the skipjack management procedure generated an unconstrained estimated TAC of 528,130 t which is more than 10% lower than the TAC set for 2024–2026. The SC NOTED that by applying the maximum 10% decrease in the TAC as per Resolution 24/07, the MP recommended a TAC of 565,745 t. per year for 2027–2029. Therefore, the WPM RECOMMENDED that the SC adopt the TAC advice for skipjack tuna of 565,745 t as determined by the MP.	SC28.23	Skipjack tuna MP (Resolution 24/07) (Para 212) The SC NOTED the 2025 running of the SKJ MP NOTING that the this generated an unconstrained TAC of 528,130 t, which is >10% lower than the TAC set for 2024–2026. By applying the maximum 10% decrease in the TAC as per Resolution 24/07, the SC RECOMMENDED the Commission to adopt the TAC for skipjack tuna of 565,745 t. per year for 2027–2029

WPM016.03	(Para 44) Based on the available evidence reviewed, the WPM RECOMMEND that there are no exceptional circumstances regarding the application of the skipjack tuna Management Procedure		
WPM016.04	<i>Bigeye tuna MP (Resolution 22/03)</i> (Para 49) The WPM NOTED that the paper highlighted that 2024 catch has exceeded the 2024 TAC, which is an exceptional circumstance. The WPM RECOMMENDED that the Commission should ensure that the appropriate provisions (e.g., in paragraphs 4, 5 and 8) of 23/04 are implemented to ensure catches remain inside the TAC, conditional on the allowances and requirements of those provisions.	SC28.22	(Para 211) The SC NOTED that 2024 catch of bigeye tuna (82,874 t) has exceeded the 2024 TAC (80,583 t), which is an exceptional circumstance, and as such, the SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission should ensure that the appropriate provisions (e.g., in paragraphs 4, 5 and 8) of 23/04 are implemented to ensure catches remain inside the TAC, conditional on the allowances and requirements of those provisions:
WPM016.05	<i>Swordfish MP (Resolution 24/08)</i> (Para 64) WPM RECOMMENDED that the SC STRESS to the Commission that the TAC resulted from the MP (Resolution 24/08) should be urgently proposed and adopted by the Commission in 2026.	SC28.24	(Para 216) The SC RECOMMENDED that the Commission urgently propose and adopt the TAC for swordfish resulting from the MP (Resolution 24/08, now superseded by 25/07) in 2026.
WPM016.07	<i>Stock assessment and stock status guidance</i> (Para 153) The WPM RECOMMENDED that the SC consider not using the target 40% SSB₀ to determine stock status, using instead other reference points. The WPM SUGGESTED that a CPC could bring a proposal to the SC to facilitate		(para. 214) The SC AGREED not to use the target 40% SSB ₀ to determine stock status for skipjack tuna, NOTING that the SC is still in discussion regarding appropriate ways to define the status of this species.

	further discussion, including through a possible intersessional process.			
WPM016.08	<i>Revision of the WPM Program of work (2026–2030)</i> (para.159) The WPM RECOMMENDED that the Scientific Committee consider and endorse the WPM Programme of Work (2026–2030), as provided in Appendix IV.			(para. 290) The SC NOTED that the consolidated table of priorities does not replace the full programme of work of each Working Party (Appendix 37a-g) and that adequate attention and focus should still be allocated to those activities where possible. The SC further NOTED that Table 3 has been developed by the SC and Working Party Chairs to provide more specific direction to the IOTC Secretariat and the SC Chair as to the priorities of the SC so that, if and when external funding becomes available intersessionally, it is possible to clearly prioritise across all working parties based on the objectives of the SC (as agreed in IOTC-2014-SC17-R, para. 179).
WPM16.09	<i>Date and place of the 17th and 18th sessions of the WPM</i> (para 165) The WPM RECOMMENDED the SC consider mid-late October 2026 as a preferred time period to hold the WPM17. As usual it was also AGREED that this meeting should continue to be held back-to-back with the WPTT.			Para (296) 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.
WPM16.10	(Para 168): In view of the status of the albacore and blue shark MSE, and the potential progress that may be achieved in the coming months, the WPM RECOMMENDED that an extra TCMP meeting in January 2026 is not organized			

WPM16.11	<i>Review of the draft, and adoption of the Report of the 13th Session of the WPM</i> (para. 169) The WPM RECOMMENDED that the Scientific Committee consider the consolidated set of recommendations arising from WPM16, provided in Appendix V.			

WPM16 Report	WPM16 REQUESTS	Update/Progress
Para. 34	<i>Skipjack MP (Resolution 24/07)</i> The WPM also NOTED that preliminary analyses of historical species composition data using the new T3R procedure yielded results similar to those obtained with the T3 procedure. The transition to the new T3R procedure is planned for 2025, and over time, it will be applied retrospectively to historical data (with the intention to cover the past 5–10 years). The WPM REQUESTED that a comparison of the two approaches for estimating species composition from historical data be conducted and presented at the WPDCS meetings.	Update: CPCs to provide update.
Para. 74	<i>YELLOWFIN TUNA MSE: UPDATE</i> The WPM NOTED that a specification document for the yellowfin MP has been drafted which documents all aspects of the MP development. The WPM REQUESTED that a similar specification document be created when developing MPs for all other IOTC species. The WPM further NOTED that the framework for this specification document has been used for multi-species MPs in ICCAT and could also be applied in future multi-species MSE work in the IOTC.	Update: ongoing.

Para. 98	Blue SHARK MSE: UPDATE The WPM AGREED that both TAC- and length-based management procedures should be tested and REQUESTED the results to be presented first to the MSE Taskforce, followed by the TCMP prior to Commission consideration.	Update: Completed.
Para. 115	Revision of the WPM Program of work (2026–2030). 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 (2026–2030) that are yet to be funded, for circulation to potential funding bodies.	Update: Completed.