
REVISION OF THE WPM PROGRAM OF WORK (2027–2031)

PREPARED BY: IOTC SECRETARIAT, 6 OCTOBER 2026

PURPOSE

To ensure that participants at the 17th Working Party on Methods (WPM17) 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 28th Session of the SC:

- (Para. 286) The SC **NOTED** IOTC–2025–SC28–08 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. 287) 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. 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.
- (Para. 289) The SC **AGREED** on the consolidated table of priorities across all working parties (Table 3), as developed by each working party Chairperson, and **REQUESTED** that the IOTC Secretariat, in consultation with the Chairpersons and vice-Chairpersons of the SC and relevant working parties, develop ToRs for the specific projects to be carried out.
- (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).

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 WPM17 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–2026–WPM17–07, which encouraged the WPM to further develop and refine its Program of Work for 2027–2031 to align with the requests and directives from the Commission and Scientific Committee.
- 2) **RECOMMEND** a revised Program of Work for 2027–2031 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 2025.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Working Party on Methods Program of Work (2026–2030) – to be updated for 2027 - 2031

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 (2026–2030)

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				
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
1. Management Strategy Evaluation	Continuation of Management Strategy Evaluation for Albacore, Yellowfin, and 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					
	1.1.2 Implementation of candidate MP 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 MP performance review (preceded by the development of TORs),				
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 of the MSE/MP						
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.					
CPUE Standardisation	Continue the development of CPUE series for IOTC Species to be used in stock assessment and MSE/MP. Develop mechanism to ensure that CPUE standardization for the MP follows the MP specifications. Consider alternative CPUE (and catch data) to explore alternative plausible time series to address potential uncertainties associated with productivity to be included in OM conditioning					

Stock assessment	Exploration and development of next-generation integrated fisheries stock assessment models (e.g., age-structured state-space assessment models) and their application to tuna stocks.					
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

Year	Albacore	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Swordfish	Blueshark
2026	TCMP: Provide advice to Commission on elements of OMs and, if possible, candidate MPs, that require a decision by the Commission, including the performance of candidate MPs against Commission objectives.	TCMP: Provide advice to the Commission on SKJ TAC for 2027-2029	TCMP: Provide advice to Commission on elements of OMs and, if possible, candidate MPs, that require a decision by the Commission, including the performance of candidate MPs against Commission objectives.	TCMP: Consider outcomes of BET MSE review and provide advice Commission.	TCMP:	TCMP: Provide advice to Commission on elements of OMs and, if possible, candidate MPs, that require a decision by the Commission, including the performance of candidate MPs against Commission objectives.
	Commission: Consider work and advice from subsidiary bodies and provide	Commission: Adopt the TAC for 2027-2029	Commission: Consider work and advice from subsidiary bodies and provide	Commission: Consider outcomes of BET MSE review	Commission:	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. WPs/SC: Consider recommendations from the Commission and undertake MSE to provide advice on the performance of candidate MPs.		direction to the WPs/SC on the need to undertake further MSE. WPs/SC: Consider recommendations from the Commission and undertake MSE to provide advice on the performance of candidate MPs.			direction to the WPs/SC on the need to undertake further MSE. WPs/SC: Consider recommendations from the Commission and undertake MSE to provide advice on the performance of candidate MPs.
		WPs/SC: Stock Assessment to monitor MP implementation Review Exceptional Circumstances		WPs/SC: Review Exceptional Circumstances	WPs/SC: Stock Assessment to monitor MP implementation Review Exceptional Circumstances	
2027	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		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		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	

	Commission objectives.		against Commission objectives.			against Commission objectives.
	Commission: Consider work and advice from subsidiary bodies. Decision and adoption of an MP.	Commission:	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 of candidate or alternative MPs.
	WPs/SC: Consider recommendations from the Commission	WPs/SC: Review Exceptional Circumstances	WPs/SC: Consider recommendations from the Commission and undertake MSE to provide advice on the performance of 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 2029-2032.	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 2029-2032.	WPs/SC: Consider recommendations from the Commission and undertake MSE to provide advice on the performance of candidate MPs.
2028	TCMP:	TCMP:	TCMP:	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.	Provide advice to the Commission on BET TAC for 2029-2032.	Provide advice to the Commission on SWO TAC for 2029-2032.	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.
	Commission:	Commission:	Commission: Consider work and advice from subsidiary bodies. Decision and adoption of an MP.	Commission: Adopt the TAC for 2029-2032.	Commission: Adopt the TAC for 2029-2032.	Commission: Consider work and advice from subsidiary bodies. Decision and adoption of an MP.
	WPs/SC: Review Exceptional Circumstances	WPs/SC: Review Exceptional Circumstances	WPs/SC: Consider recommendations from the Commission	WPs/SC: Stock Assessment to monitor MP implementation. Review Exceptional Circumstances.	WPs/SC: Review Exceptional Circumstances	WPs/SC: Consider recommendations from the Commission