Report of the 17th Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria

Held by videoconference, 13 – 14 October 2026

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ACRONYMS

AFAD	Anchored fish aggregating device
BMSY	Biomass which produces MSY
CMM	Conservation and Management Measure
CNCP	Cooperating Non-Contracting Party, of the IOTC
CoC	Compliance Committee of the IOTC
CPs	Contracting Parties
CPCs	Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties
DCS	Developing Coastal State
DFAD	Drifting fish aggregating device
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FAD	Fish aggregating device
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMSY	Fishing mortality at MSY
HCR	Harvest control rule
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated
LRP	Limit reference point
LSTLV	Large-scale tuna longline vessel
MSE	Management Strategy Evaluation
NCP	Non-Contracting Party
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OT	Overseas Territories
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
SC	Scientific Committee of the IOTC
SCAF	Standing Committee on Administration and Finance of the IOTC
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
TCAC	Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria of the IOTC
TCMP	Technical Committee on Management Procedures
TRP	Target referent point
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System

HOW TO INTERPRET TERMINOLOGY CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT

This report uses the following terms and associated definitions.
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.
Level 3: General terms to be used for consistency:

AGREED: Any point of discussion from a meeting which the IOTC body considers to be an agreed course of action covered by its mandate, which has not already been dealt with under Level 1 or level 2 above; a general point of agreement among delegations/participants of a meeting which does not need to be considered/adopted by the next level in the Commission's structure.

NOTED/NOTING: Any point of discussion from a meeting which the IOTC body considers to be important enough to record in a meeting report for future reference.

Any other term: Any other term may be used in addition to the Level 3 terms to highlight to the reader of an IOTC report, the importance of the relevant paragraph. However, other terms used are considered for explanatory/informational purposes only and shall have no higher rating within the reporting terminology hierarchy than Level 3, described above (e.g. **CONSIDERED**; **URGED**; **ACKNOWLEDGED**).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 17th Session of the Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria (TCAC17) was held by videoconference, from 13 to 14 October 2026. The meeting was opened by and chaired by the Independent TCAC Chairperson, Mr Quentin Hanich.

The meeting was held by videoconference.

Letters of Credentials were received from 24 Contracting Parties. 6 NGOs participated in the meeting along with the Invited Experts.

[Para. 15] The TCAC **AGREED** that the work of the TCAC should continue to TCAC18. Some members expressed their position that the TCAC should be terminated while others expressed their position that they opposed termination of the work of the TCAC.

[Para. 21] The TCAC **AGREED** that TCAC18 should focus its agenda on the following three topics, with the Chairperson to develop discussion papers associated with each:

- the attribution of historical catches
- jurisdictional considerations
- treatment of artisanal and coastal fisheries

[Para. 27] The TCAC **AGREED** that TCAC18 must produce tangible outcomes that progress the development of an allocation framework.

[Para. 28] If TCAC18 is unable to produce tangible outcomes on at least one of the three priorities, then the TCAC may **RECOMMEND** that the Commission consider the future of the TCAC.

[Para. 34] The TCAC **AGREED** to commence the TCAC018 after lunch on 1 February, with plenary running until 12 noon on 4 February 2027. Due to the shortened time available, the TCAC **AGREED** to allow flexibility for the TCAC18 report, focusing the final afternoon session on clearing key decision points, with the subsequent report to be cleared intersessionally so as to ensure sufficient time for substantive discussions. Efforts would be made by the report drafting group to finalise the full draft report as much as feasible in the time available.

1. OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The 17th Session of the Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria (TCAC17) was held by videoconference, from 13 to 14 October 2026. The meeting was opened by and chaired by the Independent TCAC Chairperson, Mr Quentin Hanich.

2. LETTERS OF CREDENTIALS AND ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS

2. Letters of Credentials were received from 24 Contracting Parties. The list of participants is provided in Appendix 1.

3. Pursuant to Article VII of the IOTC Agreement and Rule XIV of the IOTC Rules of Procedure, the Commission admitted the following observers:

Non-governmental organizations having special competence in the field of activity of the Commission:

- Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources & Security (ANCORS)
- Marine Affairs Program Dalhousie
- Global Tuna Alliance (GTA)
- International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF)
- Sustainable Fisheries and Communities Trust (SFACT)
- South West Indian Ocean Tuna Forum (SWIOTUNA)

Invited consultants and experts:

- Invited Experts

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION

4. The Chairperson provided an overview of the agenda for the meeting and noted the following documents (Appendix 3):

5. The TCAC **ADOPTED** the agenda provided in Appendix 2.

6. The TCAC **NOTED** statements from Mauritius, France OT, India and Somalia which are included in Appendix 4.

4. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TO DATE

7. The TCAC **NOTED** that the Chairperson provided a brief summary of the developments on TCAC matters since TCAC13 from his perspective. This summary is provided in document IOTC-2026-TCAC17-INF02 which is based on the Chair's Explanatory Notes provided in documents IOTC-2026-TCAC17-03 and IOTC-2026-TCAC17-04

8. The TCAC **NOTED** the Chairperson's summary which highlighted that the TCAC13 had agreed to the development of a 'package deal' which would be structured around three allocation criteria:

    i. Catch History (addresses existing & historical fishing patterns, including industrial and artisanal. If artisanal data is lacking, use other indicators such as EEZ size etc)

    ii. Special Requirements (development aspirations)

    iii. Baseline (equity – everyone gets a small share).

9. The TCAC **NOTED** that although there had been some agreement on the broad inclusion of these criteria, discussions at TCAC16 **NOTED** the following unresolved matters as critical foundations for an allocation framework: 1) the attribution of historical catches from foreign vessels inside an EEZ, 2) jurisdictional considerations, 3) treatment of artisanal and coastal fisheries, and 4) the special requirements (aspirations) of Developing Coastal States (DCS), including those of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

10. The Chairperson suggested that the matters interact with each other, linking jurisdictional considerations with concerns regarding artisanal fisheries and catch attribution, and require further discussion in order to reach agreement.

11. The TCAC **NOTED** that future work in preparation for TCAC018 should build on the framework for historical catch attribution that was agreed at TCAC16 (IOTC-2026-TCAC16-R, para 81):

i. In Year 1, X% of the historical catch of a Flag State CPC fishing in another CPC's jurisdictional waters shall be attributed to the corresponding coastal State CPC. The remainder shall be attributed to the Flag State CPC.

ii. Y-X% shall be attributed to the corresponding coastal State CPC in a stepwise manner over the following Z-year period, concluding with a permanent arrangement according to a pre-agreed schedule. The remainder shall be attributed to the Flag State CPC each year during the Z-year period.

** The value of X and Y will be a range from 0 and up to 100.*

Information Paper IOTC-2026-TCAC17-INF01_Rev1

12. The Chairperson then requested that the Secretariat provide a brief presentation on the extent of IOTC catches subject to CPC-specific catch limits. This presentation was provided in document IOTC-2026-TCAC17-INF01_Rev1. Several CPCs indicated that they did not feel the presentation provided an accurate description of IOTC catch subject to CPC-specific catch limits.

13. Although several members commented that the presentation was interesting and potentially informative to guide the deliberations of the TCAC moving forward, the TCAC **NOTED** that there was some confusion and disagreement with the methodology and presentation of the results. The TCAC Chairperson therefore asked that the Secretariat, in consultation with interested members, should work to refine the methodology and clarify the presentation of the results before presenting a revised document at the TCAC18.

5. AMENDMENT AND PRIORITISATION OF TCAC WORKPLAN

14. The TCAC **NOTED** the Chairperson's suggested options for the future work of the TCAC:

Option 1. Resolution on Allocation Guidelines

- TCAC17 instructs chair to prepare a draft resolution that provides guidelines for future allocations of catch limits. Guidance is intentionally high-level, identifying values and principles that should be considered in future resolutions. No percentages or numbers.
- Draft would include a preamble that briefly summarises key discussions and international frameworks, and then outlines principles, values and tools to guide future allocations.
- Chair would distribute draft resolution in early December, for discussion and adoption at final in-person TCAC18 in February 2027. If agreed, resolution would then be recommended for adoption by IOTC31 in May 2027, concluding the work of TCAC and thereby dissolving the committee.

Option 2. Foundations for an Allocation Framework

- Amend workplan to prioritise foundational matters that are pre-requisites for any subsequent allocation framework.
- Identify two 'balanced' priorities for discussion at an in-person TCAC18 to be held in early February 2027. Balance is critical so as to ensure that all CPs see their priorities advanced and can see benefits from compromise.
- The objective of discussions would be to recommend a concise resolution for IOTC consideration that builds foundations for an allocation package and contributes to the overall effectiveness of IOTC.

15. The TCAC **AGREED** that the work of the TCAC should continue to TCAC18. Some members expressed their position that the TCAC should be terminated while others expressed their position that they opposed termination of the work of the TCAC.

16. Many Members expressed opposition to Option 1. The TCAC **NOTED** that there was a preference for Option 2, which would focus TCAC18 on the prioritisation of foundational matters that may be pre-requisites for any subsequent allocation framework.

17. Referring to Option 1, the TCAC **REQUESTED** the Chairperson to prepare a draft Preamble for TCAC18 that summarises key discussions and international frameworks, and then outlines principles, values and tools to guide future allocations.

18. One Member reiterated its position that any Resolution from the TCAC would need to include a clear allocation framework, and not only principles.

19. The Chairperson then requested guidance on what priorities should be addressed during TCAC18. The Chairperson's suggested options were:
    - treatment of artisanal fisheries AND jurisdiction
    - treatment of artisanal fisheries AND catch attribution
    - defining indicators for measuring fishing interest AND catch attribution
    - or other foundational matters that balance IOTC member interests
20. The TCAC **NOTED** that there were diverging opinions on the various combinations of priorities and that in most cases, these issues are linked.
21. The TCAC **AGREED** that TCAC18 should focus its agenda on the following three topics, with the Chairperson to develop discussion papers associated with each:
    - the attribution of historical catches
    - jurisdictional considerations
    - treatment of artisanal and coastal fisheries
22. The **TCAC NOTED** the statement from one member that no allocation framework could be agreed without clarity on the jurisdiction of the allocation framework and the treatment of artisanal fisheries.
23. The TCAC **NOTED** that consideration of indicators for measuring fishing interest and other outstanding foundational issues not addressed in TCAC18 may be considered in the future TCAC meetings, conditional on the continuation of the TCAC beyond TCAC18.
24. The TCAC **REQUESTED** the Chair to prepare draft discussion papers for TCAC18 that:
    - identify the defining characteristics required for the potential treatment of artisanal fisheries for the purpose of the allocation framework.
    - specify the attribution of catch history from foreign vessels inside an EEZ, building on the framework agreed at TCAC16.
    - specify the jurisdiction of the allocation framework in its entirety as it applies throughout the IOTC area of competence.
25. The TCAC **NOTED** the statement from one member that archipelagic waters are part of the IOTC area of competence and must therefore be included, while another CPC expressed its opposition to this statement.
26. The Chairperson proposed that TCAC18 shall review, discuss and may tentatively agree on the proposals included in the discussion papers, conditional on the updated analysis by the secretariat (referred to in paragraph 12) of the fisheries that would be impacted by these proposals.
27. The TCAC **AGREED** that TCAC18 must produce tangible outcomes that progress the development of an allocation framework.
28. If TCAC18 is unable to produce tangible outcomes on at least one of the three priorities, then the TCAC may **RECOMMEND** that the Commission consider the future of the TCAC.
29. To facilitate a more inclusive discussion at TCAC18, the TCAC **ENCOURAGED** CPCs to actively participate in the meeting or provide written position papers setting out their views on the key outstanding issues prior to the TCAC18.

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE

30. The TCAC **NOTED** that during the 30th Session of the Commission (S30), Korea had proposed Terms of Reference for the TCAC as proposal IOTC-2026-S30-PropF.
31. The TCAC **NOTED** that at previous sessions of the TCAC there had been some agreement that TORs were not required for the TCAC and this was expressed during the discussions at S30. IOTC-2026-S30-R, para. 114, *"The Commission NOTED that some CPCs reiterated the previous decision of the Commission not to develop TORs*

for this body. Others indicated that adopting a legally binding instrument on CPCs for a temporary subsidiary body of the Commission, was not an appropriate path forward."

32. The TCAC **NOTED**, however, that members retain the right to propose TORs in the future should they so choose, as with any proposals for Conservation and Management Measures for consideration by the Commission.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1. TCAC18 2027 Meeting schedule and location

33. The TCAC **THANKED** India for their generous offer to host the TCAC18 in Kochi from 1 February – 4 February 2027.

34. The TCAC **AGREED** to commence the TCAC018 after lunch on 1 February, with plenary running until 12 noon on 4 February 2027. Due to the shortened time available, the TCAC **AGREED** to allow flexibility for the TCAC18 report, focusing the final afternoon session on clearing key decision points, with the subsequent report to be cleared intersessionally so as to ensure sufficient time for substantive discussions. Efforts would be made by the report drafting group to finalise the full draft report as much as feasible in the time available.

Adoption Of Report

35. The report of the 17th Session of the Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria (IOTC–2026–TCAC17–R) was **ADOPTED** on 24 November 2026.

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APPENDIX 2.
ADOPTED AGENDA OF THE 17TH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON ALLOCATION CRITERIA

Date: 13 - 14 October, 2026
Location: Virtual - Zoom
Time: 11h00 – 15h00 hours, daily
Chairperson: Mr Quentin Hanich

1. **OPENING OF THE SESSION**
2. **LETTERS OF CREDENTIALS AND ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS**
3. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION**
4. **SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TO DATE**
5. **AMENDMENT AND PRIORITISATION OF TCAC WORKPLAN**
6. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**
7. **OTHER BUSINESS**
8. **ADOPTION OF REPORT**

APPENDIX 3.
LIST OF DOCUMENTS

All documents are available on the IOTC website [click here]

Document number	Title
IOTC-2026-TCAC17-01a	Draft agenda
IOTC-2026-TCAC17-03	Chairs Explanatory Note
IOTC-2026-TCAC17-04	Chair's Explanatory Memo TCAC Resolution and Proposed Approach
Information papers	
IOTC-2026-TCAC17-INF01_Rev1	Extent of IOTC catches subject to CPC-specific catch limits
IOTC-2026-TCAC17-INF02	Chairs Introductory presentation
IOTC-2026-TCAC17-INF03	TCAC Decisions
Circular 2024-34	FAO legal advice
Reference documents	
IOTC-2026-TCAC17-REF01	Statements by Mauritius
IOTC-2026-TCAC17-REF02	Somalia's Position on Priorities for TCAC17
IOTC-2026-TCAC17-REF03	Statement by France OT
Datasets	
IOTC-2026-TCAC17-INF01_Rev1	Data used to assess the extent of IOTC catches subject to CPC-specific catch limits

APPENDIX 4.
MEMBER STATEMENTS

17th Meeting of IOTC Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria
13-14 October 2026

Agenda Item 2: Letters of Credentials and Admission of Observers

Statement by the Republic of Mauritius

The Republic of Mauritius reiterates the statement which it had made under agenda item 3 at the 10th meeting of the Technical Committee held from 20 to 23 June 2022 in Seychelles and which is annexed to the report of that meeting (Document IOTC-2022-TCAC10-R[E], Appendix 4).

The long-standing position of the Republic of Mauritius as regards the United Kingdom's purported membership of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission as a "coastal State situated wholly or partly within the Area [of competence of the Commission]" remains unchanged.

The Republic of Mauritius requests that this statement be annexed to the report of this meeting.

17th Meeting of IOTC Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria
13-14 October 2026

Agenda Item 3: Adoption of the Agenda and Arrangements for the Session

Statement by the Republic of Mauritius

The Republic of Mauritius reiterates the statements which it had made with regard to the Chagos Archipelago and the Island of Tromelin under agenda item 6 at the 10th meeting of the Technical Committee held from 20 to 23 June 2022 in Seychelles and which are annexed to the report of that meeting (Document IOTC-2022-TCAC10-R[E], Appendix 4).

The Republic of Mauritius also reaffirms that since the Chagos Archipelago and the Island of Tromelin form an integral part of its territory, no State other than the Republic of Mauritius can be granted any allocations in respect of the Chagos Archipelago and the Island of Tromelin.

The Republic of Mauritius requests that this statement be annexed to the report of this meeting.

17ème comité technique sur les critères d'allocation de la CTOI – 13-14 octobre 2026
Déclaration de la République française en réponse à la déclaration de la République de Maurice

En réponse à la déclaration de la République de Maurice, la République française réitère la déclaration relative à l'île de Tromelin effectuée lors de la 19e session du Comité de Conformité qui s'est tenue du 08 au 10 et 12 mai 2022 aux Seychelles, et qui est annexée au rapport de ladite réunion (Document IOTC-2022-CoC19-R, Appendix 4). La République française demande que cette déclaration soit annexée au rapport de la présente réunion.

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17th IOTC Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria – 13–14 October 2026 Statement by the French Republic in response to the statement by the Republic of Mauritius

In response to the statements by the Republic of Mauritius, the French Republic reiterates the statements which it made with regard to the Island of Tromelin at the 19th Session of the Compliance Committee held from 8-10 and 12 May 2022 in Seychelles and which are annexed to the report of that meeting (Document IOTC–2022–CoC19–R, Appendix 4). The French Republic requests that this statement be annexed to the report of this meeting.

Opening Remarks from India

Respected Chair, distinguished delegates and colleagues,
On behalf of the Indian delegation, I extend warm greetings to the Chair and all participating delegations.
India appreciates the Chair's continued leadership and efforts to guide the Committee towards an equitable allocation framework for tuna resources in the Indian Ocean. We reaffirm our full support and look forward to constructive deliberations towards a fair, transparent and mutually acceptable outcome.

Chair and distinguished delegates,

India recognises the importance of cooperation among coastal States and flag States in ensuring the conservation and sustainable management of tuna stocks. An effective allocation framework must balance conservation objectives with the sovereign rights of coastal States, livelihood requirements of artisanal fishers and the legitimate developmental needs of fishing communities.

Allocation criteria must be objective, transparent, scientifically defensible and responsive to the diverse circumstances of CPCs.

India reiterates its full support for your leadership and remains committed to the work of this Committee. We look forward to productive deliberations and meaningful progress towards an allocation framework that is equitable, transparent, scientifically sound and consistent with international law.

I thank you, Chair, and distinguished delegates.

JAMHUURIYADDA FEDERAALKA SOOMAALIYA
WASAARADDA KALLUUMEYSIGA IYO
DHAQAALAHA BULUUGGA
XAFIISKA AGAASIMAHA GUUD

جمهورية الصومال الفيدرالية
وزارة الثروة السمكية
والاقتصادالازرق
مكتب مدير العام

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF SOMALIA
MINISTRY OF FISHERIES AND BLUE ECONOMY
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

Reference: MFBE/ODG/00129/26 Date: 03/10/2026

Dr. Paul de Bruyn
Executive Secretary
Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
Victoria, Seychelles

Subject: Somalia's Position on Priorities for TCAC17 from Tue, 13/10/2026 - 11:00 to Wed, 14/10/2026 - 15:00

Dear Executive Secretary,

The Federal Republic of Somalia refers to the Chair' s communication concerning the work of the Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria and recalls its earlier submission circulated through IOTC Circular 2025–41.

Somalia supports the continuation of the TCAC process. However, an allocation regime can command legitimacy only if its foundational legal and equity questions are resolved before numerical criteria are negotiated.

First, Somalia does not support the inclusion of fishing opportunities within exclusive economic zones in a Commission-wide allocation system. IOTC conservation competence must not be confused with ownership or allocation of resources under national jurisdiction. The sovereign rights of coastal States under Article 56 of UNCLOS and Article XVI of the IOTC Agreement must remain fully protected.

Catches taken by foreign vessels within a coastal State' s EEZ must not be treated as flag-State high-seas catch history. Historical access to another State' s EEZ cannot mature into a permanent allocation entitlement against that coastal State.

Second, artisanal and small-scale fisheries operating within national jurisdiction should remain outside the regional allocation and payback system. Their exclusion would not remove them from conservation responsibilities. Their management would remain the responsibility of the coastal State, consistent with food security, livelihoods, and sustainable fisheries management.

Third, historical catch cannot operate only as a source of entitlement. It must also carry responsibility. CPCs and fleets that derived the greatest benefit from past exploitation and contributed disproportionately to stock decline should bear a

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correspondingly greater share of rebuilding reductions. Developing coastal States that contributed least to depletion should not surrender their future development opportunities to preserve historical advantages created by others.

The absence of historical catch data from developing coastal States must not be converted into permanent allocation disadvantage. Data scarcity is not evidence of an absence of rights, resource endowment or legitimate fishing aspirations.

Accordingly, Somalia proposes that TCAC18 prioritize two balanced matters:

1. The separation of EEZ and high-seas fishing opportunities, including the treatment of foreign-vessel catches and the exclusion of artisanal and small-scale fisheries from regional allocation and payback arrangements.
2. An equitable allocation framework combining biomass distribution, geographical relationship to the stocks, the needs of developing coastal States and responsibility for historical depletion.

Excluding EEZ catches from regional allocation does not prevent biomass distribution, EEZ size and geographical relationship to the stocks from informing the equitable allocation of high-seas fishing opportunities.

Somalia remains committed to constructive negotiations. It cannot, however, support an approach under which past extraction becomes permanent entitlement, while the coastal States closest to the resources inherit the burden of rebuilding them.

Somalia kindly requests the Secretariat to circulate this communication to all CPCs and to submit it for consideration by TCAC17.

Yours sincerely,

H.E. ABDI DIRSHE

Director General
Somali Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy

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