



**SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE ROADMAP INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP
(SPA-Roadmap-IWG)**

ELECTRONIC MEETING
10.00am - 2.00pm Pohnpei time, 15 July 2022

Chair's Summary Report of the South Pacific Albacore Roadmap IWG Meeting

WCPFC-SPALB-RM-2022-00

SPA-Roadmap-IWG Chair

**CHAIR'S SUMMARY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE ROADMAP
INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP MEETING**

WCPFC-SPALB-RM-2022-00

AGENDA ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

1.1 Opening Remarks

1. The South Pacific Albacore Roadmap Intersessional Working Group Meeting was held electronically on 15th July 2022. The meeting was opened by the Chair of the SPARM-IWG, Ms. Neomai Ravitu. The Chair noted the priorities for the WG as noted in Paragraphs 183 and 194 of the WCPFC18 Summary Report, and getting clear directions from IWG participants on the iTRP, the Management Procedures, Total Allowable Catch, Harvest Strategy for SPA, and the new and enhanced Conservation Management Measure.

2. The list of participants to this virtual meeting is included in **Annex A**.

1.2 Adoption of Agenda

3. The Chair referred the IWG participants to WCPFC-SPALB-RM-2022-01 on the provisional agenda.

4. American Samoa moved the adoption of the agenda which was adopted without objections from the IWG participants (**Annex B**).

AGENDA ITEM 2. OBJECTIVES OF 2022-RM-IWG

5. The Chair provided a brief recap of progress since WCPFC18 and highlighted the objectives of the SPA-Roadmap IWG in 2022.

6. PNA + Tokelau thanked the Chair for the presentation of the summary paper on where the IWG is and the Chair's objectives of the meeting. They noted that the three areas that were flagged for the IWG to get direction on at this IWG meeting were the interim TRP, the overall harvest level and the management procedure for SP albacore.

7. PNA+ Tokelau noted that SPC would be making presentations on the recalibration of the interim TRP and the implications that might have as noted in the Chair's Paper. The current iTRP depletion level of 56% was agreed to at WCPFC15, with the objective of achieving an 8% increase in CPUE for the southern LL fishery as compared to 2013 levels, and where the timeline for achieving the iTRP was for no longer than 20 years. Four years have passed since the agreement of the interim TRP and no action has been taken.

8. PNA + Tokelau also stated that the rebuilding targets imagined by the IWG would need careful consideration with a discussion on the specific objectives and acceptable trade-offs between catch reduction and gains in catch rates. They suggested that getting an outcome on that would be a significant gain given the few years of momentum the IWG had lost on this work.

9. PNA + Tokelau also noted within the draft Chair's Work Plan for 2022 that there was a consideration of a draft CMM. They were concerned that the time allotted for the discussion and absorption of recent information was inadequate to make firm decisions on a draft CMM at this time. They would also appreciate the Chair's thoughts on progressing discussions further through the year and perhaps look to have a revised draft CMM considered in 2023.

10. The Chair acknowledged the PNA + Tokelau comments and proposed to move on to the next agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM 3. SPA MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

11. The Chair called on the Scientific Services Provider to present on Agenda Item 3.1.

12. SPC (Grahame Pilling) presented on *Current status of the iTRP and management objectives for South Pacific albacore* and noted some key uncertainty in stock assessment which is the movement due to less tagging information.

13. The Chair opened the floor for discussions.

14. China noted the delayed implementation of TRP, and the difficulty to consider a TAC and allocation this year. China also noted PNA + Tokelau's suggestions to consider enhancing the existing CMM. They viewed that the IWG can only have amended measures in WCPFC and encouraged IATTC compatible measures but not the entire Pacific as IATTC has its own process. They also suggested the need for The Tokelau Arrangement to update on Zone Based Management.

15. Solomon Islands made a statement on behalf of PNA, requesting clarification on the reference period used for recalibration analysis and suggested to probably explore other reference years such as 2015-2018 to provide more options for consideration. PNA raised concern about the link between the vulnerable biomass and the signal from the fisher in relation to setting a management procedure that would demonstrate large variability in the size information and CPUE information coming from the fishery.

16. SPC responded that should managers desire 2015-2018 reference years, they are able to run an analysis and they will also need guidance from managers on the required management options, similar to the skipjack management objectives with catch and levels determined.

17. China stated that the reference years are recent which they are able to support. They also noted the chartering arrangements in relation to reference years and also noted the reference period from the Solomon Islands of 2015-2018 and that the Solomon Islands had the highest catches in 2016. They agreed to an enhancement of the existing CMM.

18. SPC also made further clarification on the reference year 2017-2019.

19. The Chair acknowledges all comments made by IWG participants, particularly on the suggestions for exploring other reference years' options, and proposed to move on to the next agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM 4. HARVEST STRATEGY FOR SPA (MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE)

20. The Chair called on the Scientific Services Provider to present Agenda Item 4.1 and highlighted the point that discussions around management objectives are necessary in allowing for discussions of Management Procedures and design of Harvest Control Rules.

21. SPC (Robert Scott) presented on *Background on South Pacific Albacore MSE development* and the initial focus on empirical management procedures. They informed the IWG that it took more time than anticipated and the need to also consider future uncertainty such as effort creep and climate change. They raised some questions such as whether this will include WCPO only or include EPO, the consideration of reference period, management through catch or effort, the catch constraints, the years to be considered for setting targets and the fisheries/gears to be included.

22. The Chair opened the floor for discussions.

23. China is of the view that all fisheries should be in the MP. They are not so sure of the difference between operating on catches or effort, but catches are easy to understand. With regards to the reference years, they stated that there should be an option to allow CCM to choose the best year of their own catches for reference year, or recent catches, or the last 10-15 years. If the CCMs choose their best catches, then this would lead to higher TAC but numbers are needed for consideration.

24. SPC responded that based largely on stock assessments (2018 & 2021), fisheries are modeled over aggregated fisheries for different assessment regions. Any allocation issues will be a different process and they need to think about how to represent the issues raised by China implemented in the model. SPC stated that here, harvest strategy sets the overall level of catch and separate discussion for allocation and allocation frameworks that they are willing to assist in.

25. Canada stated that under the North Pacific (NP) albacore MSE, the evaluated management procedures operated under catch control or mixed catch/effort control.

26. SPC stated that there is a skipjack combined approach, with some managed through effort and some through catch, so this can be looked at for SPA. They were however not clear about MP being operated by both catch and effort.

27. Canada clarified that the NP albacore troll and pole and line fisheries were managed via effort and longline via catch in the MSE simulations.

28. Papua New Guinea thanked the Chair and SPC for the presentation and gave a statement on behalf of PNA. The previous discussions on the focusing work for 2023, on dealing with a 'recasting' of the TRP and the objectives of the fishery, paves the way for the IWG to consider more specifically the different elements of the management procedure. The PNA specifically refers to the estimation model, candidate harvest control rule(s), and management strategy evaluation. They thought that by focusing the IWG on that work, next year would support the progress to draft management procedures. However, they were concerned that if a lot of effort was going to be put into reviewing the Tropical Tuna CMM and related allocations, that might limit how far we could get on albacore.

29. New Zealand asked SPC about the design for Management Procedures and how these would reflect the troll and longline fisheries, which have very different characteristics. Troll and longline fisheries may need to be treated differently within the Management Procedure. One size may not fit all. It may not be as simple as managing troll by effort and longline by catch as suggested in the "chat".

30. SPC responded that this would be possible and there were possibilities to explore more complicated Management Procedures related to this, but, so far, they were only looking at fairly straight-forward options. The key is identifying how these fisheries should be treated and putting it through the MSE and testing it. They can also look at discussing what IWG participants want to achieve for their fisheries and incorporating them into investigations.

31. The Chair acknowledged and thanked all comments given and invited IWG participants to send in their intervention to the Secretariat to be put into the record.

AGENDA ITEM 5. SETTING A TAC

32. The Chair called on the Scientific Services Provider to present Agenda Item 5.

33. SPC (Sam McKechnie) presented the *Recent fishing patterns and relevance for setting TACs and allocations*.

34. PEW commented that the catch in the 3-year baseline seemed to be the highest (so there would be less reductions if we were referring to recent years' average) and the EPO catch was unregulated, but there were proposals for this year, which was something that should be monitored.

35. Tokelau made a statement on behalf of PNA+ that they will continue to use the pre-existing system that is currently implemented which is the Longline Vessel Day Scheme (LL VDS). They will also continue to engage in discussions on that understanding. They provided clarity that the LL VDS is the management system used by the PNA+ for managing their longline fisheries and they will take into consideration commitments to any limits set for SPA through that.

36. Canada raised a question for SPC if there were similar trends and time series available for the number of vessels since the CMM noted the number of vessels operating and whether there was data available from the early 2000s to the present.

37. SPC responded that there were general estimates, but not specific to SPA. Historically those estimates were not as good as more recent estimates. In terms of area, they can start looking in detail at 10 degrees South. They have the means to start looking at where vessels are targeting, which hasn't been done yet. SPC also referred to TCC-2021-IP-07 for the IWG participants' reference.

38. China acknowledged the PNA+ Tokelau on the continuation of the implementation of the VDS system and believed in the high seas, there should be a flag-based limit similar to the Tropical Tuna measure. It agreed that there would be a challenge to SPA on the establishment of TAC.

39. The Chair encouraged members to give guidance on further directions on TRP, MP, and others and proposed to move on to the next agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM 6. IWG WORK PLAN

40. The Chair went through the work plan (WCPFC-SPA-RD-2022-04) and invited comments from the IWG participants.

41. China supports the work plan but on the last line "WCPFC19 considers the SPA CMM for **possible** endorsement".

42. Tokelau stated that is the plan was very ambitious as noted by the Chair, and preference of PNA+ was that the IWG focus on the development of elements of the MP in terms of individual elements, such as the estimation model, HCR and MSE in 2023.

43. New Zealand agreed with Tokelau and others that it is an ambitious work plan. New Zealand also raised a question on what would the focus be, should the CMM be taken to WCPFC19 this year. There had been substantive discussions on a Harvest Strategy for SPA and a TAC but no conclusions. At this point, it

would be better to ensure the SPA IWG work plan is complementary to the Harvest Strategy work plan for SPA.

44. PEW called on the PNA and China to consider taking action in 2023 as a delay would result in more pain in the future.

45. Japan stated their view on the Scientific Committee's work on the harvest strategy that would be important in this development of the SPA roadmap.

46. The Chair acknowledged Japan and all other comments which would be taken into account.

47. Draft proposed work plan 2022 is attached under **Annex C** and the revised proposed work plan is attached under **Annex D**.

AGENDA ITEM 7. OTHER MATTERS

48. No other matters were raised from the IWG participants.

AGENDA ITEM 8. CLOSE OF MEETING

49. The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions on the discussion topics brought to this IWG meeting. The summary report will be compiled into a Chair's Summary Report that will be circulated in two weeks' time. General Outcomes and Recommendations are in **Annex E**.

50. The meeting officially closed at 1:12 pm Pohnpei Time.

SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE ROADMAP INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP

ELECTRONIC MEETING
10am to 2pm Pohnpei Time, 15 JULY 2022

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SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE ROADMAP INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP

ELECTRONIC MEETING
10am to 2pm Pohnpei Time, 15 JULY 2022

AGENDA

TIME	AGENDA
10:00-10:15	AGENDA ITEM 1. Opening of the Meeting
	1.1 Opening remarks by the Chair
	1.2 Adoption of Agenda
10:15-10:30	AGENDA ITEM 2. Objectives of 2022 SPA-RM-IWG
	2.1 Chair to provide a brief recap of progress since WCPFC18 and highlight the objectives of the SPA-RM-IWG in 2022.
10:30-11:30	AGENDA ITEM 3. SPA Management Objectives
	3.1 Scientific Services Provider to present the options to achieve the interim TRP.
	3.2 IWG to discuss whether the SPA interim TRP and management objectives continue to be valid ¹ .
11:30-12:30	AGENDA ITEM 4. Harvest Strategy for SPA (management procedure)
	4.1 Scientific Services Provider to present the latest development of the SPA management procedure.
	4.2 IWG to discuss progressing components of the Management Procedure.
12:30-13:15	AGENDA ITEM 5. Setting a TAC
	5.1 Scientific Services Provider to present options for determining a SPA TAC.
	5.2 IWG to discuss how to set an overall TAC limit, split into zones, and allocate the limits among flags.
13:15-13:30	AGENDA ITEM 6. IWG Work Plan
	6.1 IWG to review the 2022 SPA-RM-IWG work plan and activities.
	6.2 IWG to develop the future work plan for WCPFC19.
13:30-13:50	AGENDA ITEM 7. Other Matters
13:50-14:00	AGENDA ITEM 8. Close of Meeting

¹ SPA Objectives: Para 207, WCPFC15 Summary Report:

207. WCPFC15 agreed on an interim target reference point (TRP) for south Pacific albacore at 56 percent of spawning stock biomass in the absence of fishing ($0.56 SBF=0$)¹ with the objective of achieving an 8 percent increase in catch per unit of effort (CPUE) for the southern longline fishery as compared to 2013 levels.¹ If a future stock assessment indicates that this interim TRP will not result in the desired longline CPUE, then the interim TRP will be revised in order to meet this objective. The TRP shall be reviewed every 3 years, consistent with the SP albacore assessment schedule.

SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE ROADMAP INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP

ELECTRONIC MEETING
10am to 2pm Pohnpei Time, 15 JULY 2022

PROPOSED WORK PLAN 2022

Month	Activity
April	The Chair provides a provisional 2022 work plan.
May	The IWG Chair circulates the proposed meeting date for June 2 nd 2022 for the first SPA-RM-IWG meeting. IWG Chair informs IWG participants of the cancellation of the June 2 nd SPA-RM-IWG meeting.
June	The IWG Chair circulates the proposed meeting date for July 15 th 2022 for the first SPA-RM-IWG meeting. The IWG Chair circulates the proposed Provisional Meeting Agenda. The IWG Chair circulates the Chair's Paper for IWG participants' information. IWG participants will consider how to address the following issues tasked by the Commission: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Achieving the iTRP within 20 years, as agreed by the Commission. [Selection of catch trajectories to achieve the SPA interim target reference point within the 20-year timeline.] 2. Setting an overall TAC for South Pacific albacore and split allocations between high seas and EEZs. 3. Developing an enhanced South Pacific albacore CMM [CMM components].
July	SPA-RM-IWG to hold its first meeting on 15 th July 2022. The IWG circulates the Draft Outcome of the first SPA-RM-IWG meeting.
August	Circulate the first draft of the revised CMM for SP Albacore for wider views and discussion via email.
September-October	The Chair provides the draft revision of the CMM to WCPFC Secretariat for inclusion in the TCC 18 papers for possible presentation/Q&A at TCC18. After TCC18, continue to receive comments from members via email on the draft CMM.
November	Final draft revisions to the CMM prior to WCPFC 19.
December	WCPFC 19 considers the SPA CMM for endorsement.

SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE ROADMAP INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP

ELECTRONIC MEETING
10am to 2pm Pohnpei Time, 15 JULY 2022

AMENDMENTS TO PROPOSED WORK PLAN 2022

iTRP & Management Objectives	Harvest Strategy (Management Procedure)	Total Allowable Catch (TAC)	SPA CMM
<p>1. Exploring more options for reference periods (Suggestions made for 2015-2018).</p> <p>2. Identification of candidate reference periods that reflect the types of performance desired from the S LL Fishery.</p>	<p>1. More complex options to be investigated based on further discussions with Members.</p> <p>2. Estimation model, candidate HCR and MSE work.</p>	<p>1. Proposal to IATTC for EPO SPA management should be taken into account going forward.</p>	<p>1. Circulate to Members the first draft of the revised CMM for SPA for wider views and comments.</p> <p>2. Report to WCPFC19 on the progress of developing the SPA CMM for its consideration, any further inputs, guidance or instruction to the SPA-RM-IWG.</p>

**The above was taken from discussions under the different agenda items, based on IWG participants' comments, for consideration, further input, guidance, and instruction to the Chair of the SPA IWG.*

SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE ROADMAP INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP

ELECTRONIC MEETING
10am to 2pm Pohnpei Time, 15 JULY 2022

**GENERAL OUTCOMES ON THE SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE ROADMAP
INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP MEETING**

- 1) iTRP and management objectives - There were members (PNA) who raised the issue of having more options on the reference period. While the 2017-2019 is ok for this paper, it is important to look at others, suggesting the 2015-2018 period. Another member asked that this needs more time to be absorbed, in the meantime to continue using the current measure with the use of limiting the number of vessels as it stands. SPC advised that there is a need for managers to identify candidate reference period(s) that reflect the types of performance that they desire from the Southern Longline fishery.
- 2) Harvest Strategy (management procedure) - Members raised questions with regards to how an MP can be operated bycatch/effort in a single management control rule, but generally recognized the need to incorporate all fisheries into MP/HCR development. SPC highlighted that the HS process sets the overall harvest level and that this then needs to go through a separate process for developing and designing an allocation framework. It was also noted that those options presented were relatively straightforward and that more complex options could be investigated based on further discussions with members about what they wish to achieve for their fisheries. One member raised that work should focus on the estimation model, candidate the harvest control rule(s), and management strategy evaluation. However, they raised concerns with other high-priority upcoming tasks in 2023 including the review of the TT CMM, taking precedence over SPA work progression.
- 3) TAC - Members raised concerns around the use of recent catches 2017-2019 as the baseline as these average catches represent the highest catches in the time series and a member suggested the proposal to IATTC for EPO SPA management should be taken into account going forward. A member suggested using vessel numbers rather than catch levels to reflect the working in the existing CMM and asked SPC to provide this data, which SPC noted may be found in WCPFC-TCC17-2021-IP07.
- 4) Work Plan - Members suggested that the Work Plan be revised to focus on the development of the MP work and the other issues we have discussed today. It is too ambitious to have a draft CMM for the WCFPC19 to consider. Further notes that the IWG has the responsibility to provide recommendations on the different components which in our view still has a lot of work to be undertaken. Another member suggested that the IWG work plan be aligned with the SPA Harvest Strategy and see how the IWG can progress/support this work.