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**2022 Annual Report of the Executive Director
of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission**

1.	INTRODUCTION	3
2.	WORK OF THE COMMISSION AND SUBSIDIARY BODIES	4
2.1	WCPFC 18.....	4
2.2	Intersessional Sessions of the Commission	6
2.2.1	4 th Special Session of the Commission to discuss the COVID-19 Decisions Relating to Purse Seine Observers Coverage and At-Sea Transhipment Observers (WCPFC-SS4-2022).....	6
2.2.2	First Science-Management Dialogue	6
2.3	The Scientific Committee	7
2.4	The Northern Committee.....	9
2.5	The Technical and Compliance Committee	10
2.6	The Finance and Administration Committee	13
2.7	Work of the Intersessional Working Groups.....	14
a.	Compliance Monitoring Scheme Intersessional Working Group.....	14
b.	Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring Working Group.....	15
c.	FAD Management Option Intersessional Working Group	15
d.	SP Albacore Roadmap Intersessional Working Group.....	16
e.	Intersessional Working Group to review CMM 2009-06 (Transhipment CMM)	16
f.	Intersessional work on improving labour standards for crew on fishing vessels.....	17
2.8	Future Work of the Commission and Subsidiary Bodies.....	17
3.	WORK OF THE SECRETARIAT	18
3.1	Annual overview	18
3.2	Implementation of the Secretariat Corporate Plan	19
3.3	Financial and Administrative Matters.....	34
4.	SERVICES PROVIDERS TO THE COMMISSION	35
4.1	The Oceanic Fisheries Programme of the Pacific Community (SPC-OFP).....	35
4.2	The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA).....	37
4.3	The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC).....	37
5.	CONCLUSION	37

1. INTRODUCTION

1. This report is provided pursuant to Rule 13 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure. It highlights the main work programmes and activities of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and its Secretariat in 2022. The report follows the structure of the 2021 Report, and it describes distinctively the work of the Commission through the engagements of Members, Cooperating Non-Members, and Participating Territories (CCMs) and its subsidiary bodies and those activities attributable directly to the Commission Secretariat. The report structure also enables the Secretariat to report on the implementation of the Corporate Plan for the Secretariat 2020 – 2023 which was acknowledged by the Commission at WCPFC16 in 2019 as an internal living planning document that guide the work of the Secretariat.

2. **Figure 1** below purports to graphically illustrates the major activities of the Commission and those of the Secretariat in 2022.

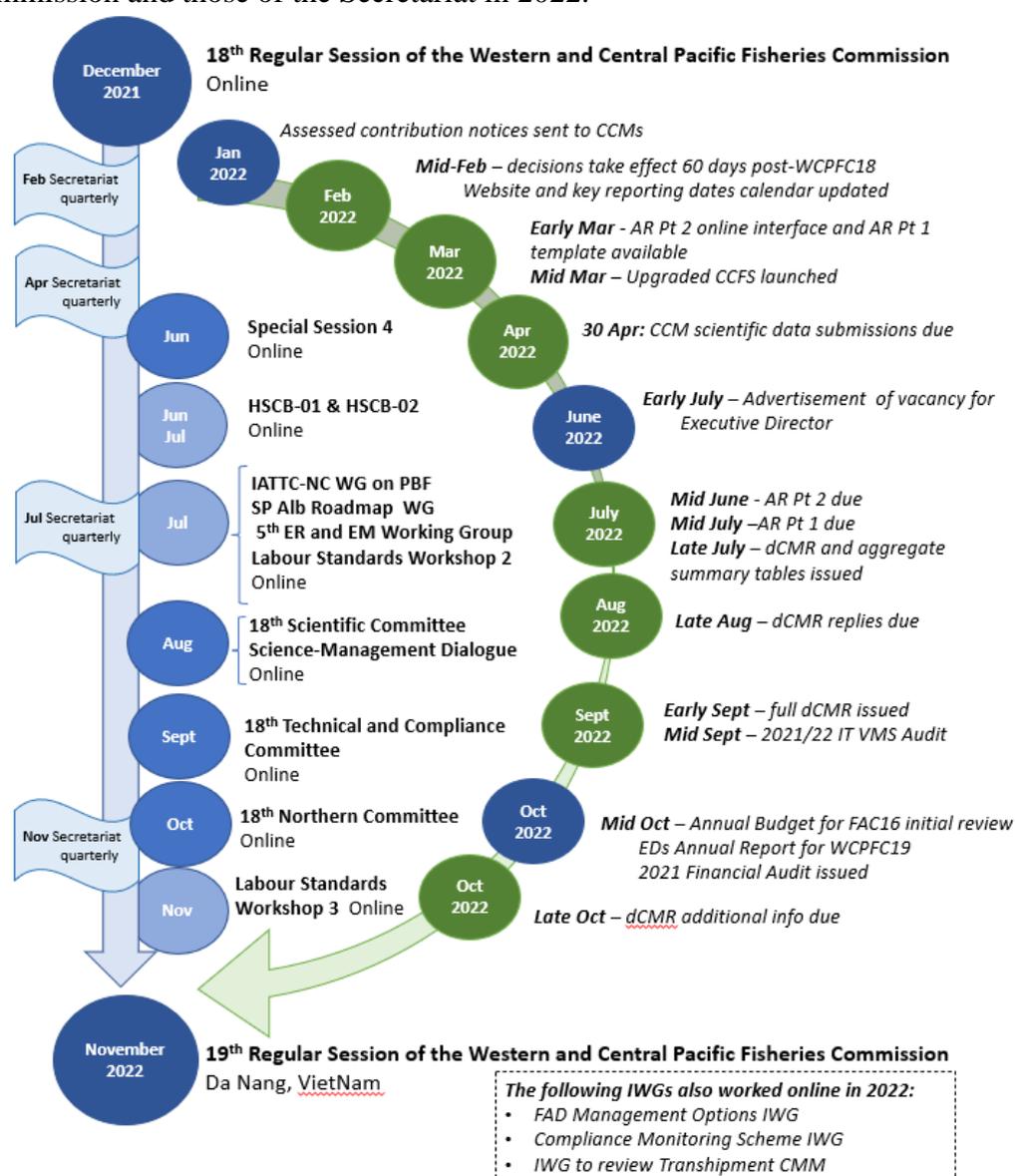


Figure 1 – Major activities of the Commission in 2022

3. Despite the gradual easing of the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the lifting of border closures and travel restrictions in many countries around the world, the work and business of the Commission and its Secretariat for most part of 2022 continued to be transacted through virtual and online mode of communications. Except for the forthcoming annual meeting of the Commission (WCPFC19) at the end of the year in Da Nang, Vietnam, all regular meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the WCPFC in 2022 were held virtually, so as most of the other intersessional activities.

4. The suite of intersessional activities of the Commission since its last annual meeting in December 2021 (WCPFC18) as graphically illustrated in Figure 1 projects a sense of how busy and heavy laden the workload for the Commission, CCMs and the Secretariat in 2022. In addition to the regular annual meetings of the subsidiary bodies, the Commission also convened two additional meetings; namely a virtual Special Session (WCPFC-SS4-2022) to discuss the COVID-19 Decisions that continued to suspend the obligations relating to the purse seine observer coverage, and the at-sea transshipment observers until the 15 June, and the first virtual Science-Management Dialogue (SMD01) to progress the development of management procedures for skipjack and South Pacific albacore. Their outcomes are reported in other sections of the report, but they added additional responsibilities to an already busy intersessional schedule. Ultimately, the subsidiary bodies and other intersessional working groups were all able to complete and progress their work and have tendered their advice and information to inform the Commission's discussions and decisions at WCPFC19. The key achievements for the Commission and the Secretariat for the reporting period are documented in this report.

2. WORK OF THE COMMISSION AND SUBSIDIARY BODIES

5. The Commission has four subsidiary bodies through which the bulk of the work of the Commission is transacted. The subsidiary bodies include the Scientific Committee, the Northern Committee, the Technical and Compliance Committee, and the Finance and Administration Committee. Their annual meetings in 2022, as usual, were scheduled in advance of the annual session of the Commission (WCPFC19) and were all held virtually except for the Finance and Administration Committee. At the date of the report, preparations were on track for physical meetings for the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC16) and the annual WCPFC19 meeting in Da Nang City, Vietnam from the 27 November to 3 December 2022. The outcomes and recommendations of the meetings of the subsidiary bodies would all be tabled and considered by the Commission at WCPFC19.

2.1 WCPFC 18

6. The regular annual meeting of the Commission in 2021 (WCPFC18) like the other meetings of the Commission subsidiary bodies in 2021, was also held virtually from 29 November to 7 December 2021 and was chaired by Ms Jung-re Riley Kim (Korea). The WCPFC18 had 5 meeting days with two rest days during the intervening weekend. Each meeting day was initially scheduled for 4 hours inclusive of a 30-minute break, however, there were meeting days that the meeting went over the allotted time.

7. The key outcomes of the WCPFC18 meeting included, inter alia:

- a) The rollover of the tropical tuna measure CMM 2020-01 for a two-year period through the adoption of CMM 2021-01 which will expire after 15 February 2024. The CMM 2021-01 is based on the same careful balance as in the previous measure

namely FAD closures; purse seine effort limits; and longline bigeye catches limits. It also includes additional enhancements to control the adverse impacts of FADs on the environment;

- b) Adoption of a new CCM 2021-03 that allowed the compliance monitoring scheme, with adjustments, to continue operation for the next two years (2022 and 2023). The adjustments included the deferral of the consideration of the compliance monitoring report for 2022, which the Secretariat will compile in 2022 as usual, to TCC19 in 2023; and requiring TCC18 in 2022 to progress and complete the CMS Future Work component of the CMS measure;
- c) Conferral of cooperating non-member status for 2022 for Curaçao, Ecuador, El Salvador, Liberia, Nicaragua, Panama, Thailand, and Vietnam;
- d) Adoption of the 2022 IUU Vessel List which included the three vessels that were on the 2021 List;
- e) Adoption of the Final Compliance Monitoring Report covering 2020 activities;
- f) Approval of various TCC17 recommendations to address identified VMS data gap issues and to improve the number of vessels reporting to the Commission VMS;
- g) Approval of an updated Workplan for the Technical and Compliance Programme to guide the work of TCC during 2022 to 2024;
- h) Adoption of an updated Indicative Workplan for the Adoption of Harvest Strategies under CMM 2014-06;
- i) Adoption of reports of the Commission's subsidiary bodies' annual meetings SC17, NC17, TCC17 and FAC15; and
- j) Approval of the budget for 2022 and endorsement of indicative budget estimates for 2023 and 2024.

8. The Commission at WCPFC18 also approved a substantial intersessional work programme for 2022 and onward years for CCMs, subsidiary bodies, the scientific services provider, and the Secretariat. The intersessional work includes, inter alia:

- a) Review of the possible removal of the suspension of observer placements requirements by virtue of the WCPFC intersessional COVID-19 pandemic decisions;
- b) The Convening, on a trial basis, of the first Science-Management Dialogue back-to-back with the SC18;
- c) Progression of future work under section IX of CMM 2021-03 to reform the compliance monitoring scheme through the CMS intersessional working group;
- d) Continue ongoing work to progress the development and implementation of the Work Plan to develop harvest strategies under CMM 2014-06;
- e) Progress ongoing enhancements by the Secretariat to the Compliance Case File System;
- f) Intersessional work on crew labour standards for fishing vessels; and
- g) Continuation of various dedicated work by intersessional working groups on electronic reporting and electronic monitoring, FAD management, management of the South Pacific albacore, and review of the Transshipment measure.

9. The Commission at WCPFC18 decided for its annual meeting to be hosted by Vietnam who would advise of the venue and date. At the date of this report, Vietnam has announced that the WCPFC19 would be held in Da Nang City, Vietnam from the 27 November to 3 December 2022.

2.2 *Intersessional Sessions of the Commission*

2.2.1 *4th Special Session of the Commission to discuss the COVID-19 Decisions Relating to Purse Seine Observers Coverage and At-Sea Transshipment Observers (WCPFC-SS4-2022)*

10. The Commission at WCPFC18 agreed to continue the suspension of observer placement requirements under the three intersessional decisions after 15 December 2021 until 15 March 2022, which were further extended to the 15 June 2022. The Commission also agreed to undertake an intersessional review to explore the possible phasing in of the removal of those suspensions. Accordingly, the Commission convened on 9th June 2022, a virtual Special Session (WCPFC-SS4-2022) to discuss the COVID-19 Decisions that continued to suspend the obligations relating to the purse seine observer coverage, and the at-sea transshipment observers until the 15 June.

11. The WCPFC-SS4-2022 was chaired by the Commission Chair. It was well attended and achieved its objective with the Commission agreeing on the following intersessional decisions to:

- a) suspend further the requirements for observer coverage on purse seine vessels until 31 December 2022, but on 1 January 2023, this suspension would be lifted, and the obligation comes into effect; and
- b) lift the suspension of the requirements for at-sea transshipment observers and further agreeing on a transitional period from 15 June to 31 December 2022 during which time CCMs should make best efforts to embark observers as guided by the agreed guidelines to enable the placement of observers on fishing vessels and carrier vessels.

12. The Outcomes Document and the Summary Report of the Special Session may be accessed at [WCPFC-2022-SS4 Meeting](#).

2.2.2 *First Science-Management Dialogue*

13. The Commission at WCPFC18 agreed to convene the first Science-Management Dialogue (SMD01), on a trial basis, back-to-back with the SC18 meeting, on the 19 and 22 of August 2022. The Commission also stipulated the ‘proposed focus areas’ for the SMD01 and required its agenda to consider views of CCMs. The SMD01 was intended to provide a space for fisheries scientists and fisheries managers to exchange views and to query each other on the implications of the scientific advice and information to better inform and expedite decision-making on management procedures.

14. The SMD01 was convened virtually on the said dates and was co-chaired by the Commission Chair; Ms Jung-re Riley Kim and the SC Chair Dr Tuikolongahau Halafihi (Tonga). It was well attended, and its agenda was tightly managed to ensure realistic and achievable expectations and outcomes, including an agenda that emphasise the close linkage between relevant outcomes of SC18 and the SMD01. The SMD01 acknowledged the work of the Scientific Services Provider (SSP) and prioritised consideration of the management procedures for skipjack tuna, while consideration for the South Pacific albacore was deferred awaiting outcomes of further analysis. The SMD01 made progress on agreeing on a reduced number of five (5) harvest control rules (HCRs) for skipjack tuna out of nine. The SMD01 also

identified additional work to be conducted by the SSP to support informed decision-making on management procedures for both skipjack and South Pacific albacore. The Outcomes Document and the Summary Report for the SMD01 are available at [SMD01 webpage](#). Although, the SMD01 agreed on the value and merits of the SMD, the SMD01 deferred to the Commission to determine the future of the SMD process and the timing and focus of future meetings.

2.3 *The Scientific Committee*

15. The Scientific Committee (SC) was established to ensure the Commission obtains for its consideration the best available scientific information.

16. The Eighteenth Regular Session of the Scientific Committee (SC18) was held virtually for seven days from 10 to 18 August 2022. The abbreviated meeting agenda was guided by the Commission's priorities, which included essential items necessary to progress the scientific work of the Commission and to provide necessary information for key decisions of the Commission. The meeting was complemented by posted documents on the [SC18 website](#) and by the [SC18 online discussion forum](#) which picked up on issues omitted from the abbreviated agenda.

17. The SC18 meeting was chaired by Dr Tuikolongahau Halafihi (Tonga). Five Theme Conveners facilitated four theme sessions of the plenary meeting, namely Dr Valerie Post (USA) for Data and Statistics; Hidetada Kiyofuji (Japan) and Keith Bigelow (USA) for Stock Assessment; Robert Campbell (Australia) for Management Issues; and Yonat Swimmer (USA) for Ecosystem and Bycatch Mitigation Themes. Over 220 delegates participated in the virtual meeting from 34 Members, Cooperating Non-Members, and Participating Territories and 19 inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. The SC Outcomes Document which included all recommendations and administrative decision points was posted on the SC18 website on 29 August 2022. The Draft SC18 Summary Report was posted on the SC18 website, and submission of participants' comments is due by 26 October 2022.

18. Key outcomes of the SC18 meeting include, inter alia:

- a) Assessment of the provisional total tuna catches in the WCPFC Statistical Area for 2021 was estimated at 2,493,571 mt which represented 87% of the total Pacific Ocean tuna catch and 56% of the global tuna catch. The value of the provisional total WCPO tuna catch was around \$4.6 billion. Detailed fishery information and economic conditions are available in the meeting document [SC18-GN-IP-01](#);
- b) SC18 reviewed the results of stock assessments conducted in 2022 with the following findings:
 - (i) **Skipjack tuna** (*Katsuwonus pelamis*). The total skipjack catch in 2021 was 1,547,945t. The overall median recent spawning depletion ($SB_{\text{recent}}/SB_{F=0}$) is 0.51 (80th percentile 0.43-0.64), which is close to the interim TRP of 0.50 and no grid models were below the LRP of 0.20 $SB_{F=0}$. The median of $F_{\text{recent}}/F_{\text{MSY}}$ was 0.32 (80th percentile 0.18-0.45). Therefore, the 2022 stock assessment indicated that the skipjack stock is not overfished, nor subject to overfishing. Refer to the SC18 Outcomes Document for further information;
 - (ii) **Pacific Bluefin Tuna** (*Thunnus orientalis*). SC18 noted that the current spawning biomass of the stock is overfished, 10.2% of the unfished level, while SSB reached its initial rebuilding target ($SSB_{\text{MED}} = 6.3\%SSB_0$) in 2019, 5 years earlier than the original anticipation. The recent (2018-2020) fishing mortality

is below the level corresponding to overfishing for many F-based reference points, including SPR20%. SC18 noted that the updated stock assessment indicates that the stock is likely recovering as planned or possibly faster and recommended that the Commission exercise a precautionary approach when it considers any revisions to the current CMM;

- (iii) **Southwest Pacific blue shark** (*Prionace glauca*). SC18 noted that the median value of relative recent dynamic spawning biomass depletion ($SB_{2017-2020}/SB_{F=0}$) was 0.71 (90th percentiles 0.37 and 0.82), and relative recent equilibrium spawning biomass depletion ($SB_{2017-2020}/SB_0$) was 0.80 (90th percentiles 0.43 and 0.90). SC18 also noted that the fishing mortality has declined over the last decade and is currently relatively low with the median $F_{2017-2020}/F_{MSY} = 0.65$ (90th percentiles 0.43 and 0.86). Based on the above information, SC18 advised the Commission that the Southwest Pacific blue shark is unlikely to be overfished and it is unlikely that overfishing is occurring when considered against MSY and depletion-based reference points;
- (iv) **Southwest Pacific shortfin mako shark** (*Isurus oxyrinchus*). The authors of the assessment report noted that the assessment models had high estimation uncertainty and were sensitive to a range of inputs. Therefore, SC18 found it was unable to provide stock status and management advice on this stock. SC18 noted that a large number of CCMs currently release (cut sharks free) shortfin mako sharks, which may result in a reduction in fishing mortality and SC18 encourages CCMs to continue to maintain this practice as a precautionary measure for a slow growing, unproductive species with unknown stock status. Noting the key uncertainties in the assessment, SC18 have provided future research recommendations to improve future stock assessment for this species;
- (v) **North Pacific blue shark** (*Prionace glauca*). SC18 noted that the current assessment is an improvement over the previous assessment in 2021 and supports the model ensemble approach taken in the 2022 stock assessment as a more comprehensive way of characterizing structural uncertainty in stock status. However, SC18 noted that the model ensemble did not consider some key uncertainties, in particular natural mortality or stock-recruitment steepness and SC18 recommended a more thorough use of the model ensemble approach to better represent uncertainty for future assessments. Median female SSB in 2020 was estimated to be 1.170 of SSB_{MSY} (80th percentile, 0.570 - 1.776) and is likely (63.5% probability) not in an overfished condition relative to MSY-based reference points. Recent annual F ($F_{2017-2019}$) is estimated to be below F_{MSY} and overfishing is very likely (91.9% probability) not occurring relative to MSY-based reference points. The base case model results show that there is a 61.9% joint probability that NP blue shark stock is not in an overfished condition and that overfishing is not occurring relative to MSY-based reference points; and
- (vi) **North Pacific striped marlin** (*Kajikia audax*). The SC18 concurred with the ISC22, which reviewed new modelling and data improvements for the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean striped marlin (WCNPO MLS) stock and concluded that this report is a work in progress, but new stock status and conservation and management advice was not available. SC18 stated it looks forward to the ISC BILLWG workplan to explore the growth curve and complete a benchmark WCNPO MLS assessment for approval at ISC23. SC18 agreed that the Conservation and Management advice for North Pacific striped marlin will be carried forward from 2019.

- c) SC18 agreed that the results of the peer review would be initially considered through an online discussion forum later in 2022 with the results of the peer review to be subsequently discussed at the 2023 Pre-Assessment Workshop; and the final peer review outcomes would be presented at SC19 in 2023;
- d) SC18 made the following decisions in respect of the 2022 Harvest Strategy Work Plan activities:
 - (i) Noting the functionality within MULTIFAN-CL for stochastic projections was under development, SC18 recommended that the updated target reference point analysis be provided to WFCPF19 for further consideration. Noting several recommendations and suggestions from CCMs on the candidate MPs, SC18 agreed that the framework necessary for evaluating candidate MPs for skipjack tuna is now fully established and ready for consideration by WCPFC19 for the adoption of a MP is on schedule in 2022. SC18, however, did not see that its role was to recommend any particular MP but to furnish the Commission with the tools to do so, and noted the use of the PIMPLE tool for this purpose;
 - (ii) SC18 reviewed the further analyses on South Pacific albacore objectives and the TRP and recommended forwarding this updated work to WCPFC19 for its deliberations on alternative TRPs. SC18 reviewed the progress on developing and testing MPs for South Pacific albacore tuna and recommended that the Commission take note of the progress to date and that further work is required prior to adoption of MP; and
 - (iii) Noting that the Commission is scheduled to adopt a TRP for both bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna in 2022, that the results of the analyses on candidate TRPs for bigeye and yellowfin had been reviewed by SC17 and presented to WCPFC18 and noting that no further analyses had been undertaken since, SC18 was unable to provide any further advice or recommendations to the Commission on this issue;
- e) SC18 recommended that ‘Ecosystem and Climate Indicators’ be a standing agenda item of the Ecosystem and Bycatch Mitigation theme session, and a project be implemented to develop and test the indicators, and available information and updates on the impacts of climate change be included or combined with status of stocks reporting;
- f) SC18 recommended to WCPFC19 the adoption of [Graphics for Best Practices for the Safe Handling and Release of Cetaceans](#)¹ and
- g) SC18 recommended the proposed work program and budget for 2023 and indicative budget for 2024 – 2025 together with CCM’s priority scores as in Table WP-01 of the SC18 Outcomes Document to the Commission.

2.4 The Northern Committee

19. The Northern Committee (NC) was established to consider and make recommendations on the formulation of conservation and management measures in respect of stocks which occur mostly in the area north of 20° north parallel namely North Pacific albacore (NPA), Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) and North Pacific swordfish, and on the implementation for the area north of 20° north parallel of such conservation and management measures as may be adopted by the Commission.

¹ SC18-EB-IP-12 <https://meetings.wcpfc.int/node/16340>

20. The 7th Session of the Joint IATTC and WCPFC-NC Working Group Meeting on the Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna (JWG07) was held online from 12 to 14 July 2022. The meeting was officiated by co-chairs Ms Dorothy Lowman (USA, IATTC) and Mr Masanori Miyahara (Japan, WCPFC-NC Chair). The goal of the meeting is to have the shared responsibility for the management of PBF between the two RFMOs, and to work together to foster common understanding about management objectives and responsibilities.
21. The JWG07 reviewed the latest updates on the PBF stock status, discussed Member's implementation of the PBF measures, develop a draft CMM for the establishment of a CDS for PBF, further develop a long-term harvest strategy (post rebuilding) including possible operational objectives and other elements necessary to further evaluate candidate harvest control rules, reference points, and long-term harvest strategy based on a MSE process. There were several substantial issues that needs to be revisited and finalized at JWG08.
22. The 18th Session of the Northern Committee (NC18) was held electronically from 4 to 6 October 2022. The meeting was chaired by Mr Masanori Miyahara (Japan) and attended by nine NC Members and eight Observers. The [NC18 Summary Report](#) is available at the NC18 website.
23. The key outcomes from NC18 include, inter alia:
- a) The NC18 requested the Commission to encourage its non-ISC CCMs to review and make necessary correction to their historical PBF catch data submitted to the Secretariat so that the ISC conduct the stock assessment based on the best available data;
 - b) The NC18 agreed to work intersessionally to continue developing a CDS for PBF;
 - c) The NC18 reviewed a draft harvest strategy for NPA and recommended that the Commission adopt the harvest strategy for the NPA in *Attachment E* of the NC18 Summary Report;
 - d) The NC18 reviewed a draft CMM for North Pacific swordfish and recommended that the Commission adopt the CMM for North Pacific Swordfish in *Attachment F* of the NC18 Summary Report. The NC noted that the proposed CMM is limited to north of 20°N and agreed to consider this issue at NC19. The NC requested that the ISC BILLWG conduct an analysis of how catch and effort for NP swordfish varies spatially in the North Pacific, with the aim of estimating the proportion of catch and effort north and south of 20°N in the Convention; and
 - e) The NC18 reviewed and adopted the 2023-2025 Work Programme for the Northern Committee (Attachment G, NC18 Summary Report).

2.5 *The Technical and Compliance Committee*

24. The Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC) was established to advise the Commission on the technical aspects of implementation of conservation and management measures and compliance with such measures.
25. The 18th Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC18) was convened virtually from 21 to 27 September 2022. The meeting was chaired by Acting TCC Chair, Ms. Emily Crigler (United States) and over 320 delegates from thirty-eight CCMs, observer organisations and the Secretariat participated in the virtual meeting. Similar to 2021, the agenda for TCC18 was prioritized in recognition of the limited plenary time in a virtual meeting setup, and mindful that WCPFC18, in extending the Compliance Monitoring Scheme

CMM for a further two years (CMM 2021-03), agreed to defer the Compliance Monitoring Report (CMR) assessment process (provisional CMR and final CMR process) in 2022 so that TCC18 could dedicate adequate time to progressing CMS Future Work components. The key outcomes of TCC18 are described in the succeeding paragraphs.

26. TCC18 dedicated more than half of the six (6) meeting days to considering the CMS-IWG Workplan activities, and there were several recommendations from TCC18 related to CMS Future work. In relation to the Compliance Monitoring Report assessment review process TCC18 recognized the increased workload which may be associated with reviewing two years of draft CMR data during TCC19. TCC18 recommended that the Commission consider adopting the same or a very similar list of obligations for review in both the 2022 and 2023 draft CMR. TCC18 recommended draft audit points for the list of obligations for review in 2022 to the Commission and also recommended that WCPFC19 task the Secretariat to apply these to its development of the 2023 draft CMR. TCC18 also noted that the Commission will need to consider whether the adopted Audit Points will apply to the 2022 draft CMR (covering 2021 reporting period and which was prepared by the Secretariat prior to TCC18). TCC18 also recommended that WCPFC19 agree to continue to require submission of Annual Report Part 2 100 days prior to TCC19. TCC18 also noted that the Commission may need to consider whether an additional day should be added to TCC19 to facilitate review of two years' CMRs in 2023.

27. TCC18 commended the work to date by the CMS-IWG Lead on Audit Points, Ms Rhea Moss-Christian (Republic of Marshall Islands) and CMS -IWG Lead on Risk Based Assessment Framework (RBAF), Ms Heather Ward (New Zealand). TCC18 recommended the RBAF to the Commission as a useful tool that CCMs may use to guide their consideration of future lists of obligations to review during the Compliance Monitoring Report Review. TCC18 also informed the Commission that it had not been able to progress on the tasking from WCPFC18, pursuant to para 46 of CMM 2021-03 related to observer participation in CMS discussions. TCC18 welcomed the nomination of Ms. Elizabeth O'Sullivan (United States) to lead CMS-IWG work to develop corrective actions.

28. In support of the CMS, TCC18 also recommended that WCPFC19 task the Secretariat with preparing and publishing additional information. TCC18 recommended that the Secretariat is tasked to prepare for review by TCC19 a paper which identifies obligations for which there is a lack of independently verifiable data and notes on potential sources of data. TCC18 also recommended that the Secretariat is tasked to prepare for review by TCC19, additional guidance to support determining the applicability of obligations and guidelines to support CCMs reporting of statements of implementation. TCC18 also recommended that the Secretariat is tasked to publish tables of CCM's limits and baselines for all relevant CMMs, and notes on their sources. TCC18 also recommended that WCPFC19 task the Secretariat to maintain the information relevant to the RABF, audit points, compliance history and other information which supports the draft CMR in one place on the Commission website.

29. TCC18 established a small working group to consider the Cooperating Non-Member applications for 2022, led by James van Meurs (Australia).

30. Due to time limitations, the annual reports of the WCPFC MCS Programmes administered by the Secretariat were taken as read by TCC18, and they covered the Vessel Monitoring System, Regional Observer Programme (ROP), Transshipment Monitoring, High Seas Boarding and Inspection, Record of Fishing Vessels, Eastern High Seas Pocket Special

Management Area, Port State Minimum Standards, Report on the performance of the E-reporting standards and their application, Administration of Data Requests and gaps in Scientific data submissions. TCC18 supported the Secretariat's recommendation to expand the annual VMS Security Audit budget, to include a more dynamic and continual assessment of the WCPFC information systems, and that additional budget be allocated for annual penetration testing of the WCPFC information systems. TCC18 also recommended that WCPFC19 approve the Secretariat's recommended modifications to CMM 2014-03 Standards and Specifications for the Record of Fishing Vessels, to support the ongoing WCPFC information system upgrade for the Record of Fishing Vessels.

31. TCC18 reviewed information provided by Indonesia to inform a Commission discussion on the baseline period or limit for the Indonesian Large Fish Handline Fishery and TCC invited Indonesia to submit a comprehensive paper for WCPFC19 consideration.

32. TCC18 also recommended that the three vessels currently on the WCPFC IUU vessel list are maintained.

33. A supporting paper by the Secretariat was positively received by TCC18 related to the consideration of potential improvements to the ROP Minimum Standard Data Fields for impacts of fishing on whale sharks and cetaceans and TCC18 supported the Commission's intention to reactivate the IWG-ROP. TCC18 recommended the IWG-ROP be tasked to develop draft recommended modifications to ROP data fields with the intention of allowing for more useful consideration of ROP data in the CCFS and in the CMS processes, and while considering their implications, including the impact on observer workloads and observer safety, as well as any related training needs. TCC18 also recommended that the IWG-ROP should prioritize work on issues such as a solution to identifying interactions with whale sharks and cetaceans, and other priority areas identified in the TCC Workplan 2022-2024. TCC18 also noted the need to revisit the ROP minimum data fields related to FADs, particularly monitoring of non-entangling and biodegradable FADs implementation in the future, to improve data quality in this area, and recommended that the IWG-ROP also be tasked to undertake this work.

34. TCC18 considered a discussion paper prepared by the IWG to review CMM 2009-06 (Transshipment CMM), Co-Chairs Mr. Felix Toa Ngwango (Vanuatu) and Dr. Alex Kahl (United States). TCC18 recommended that the Commission adopt ROP data fields to be collected by transshipment observers during transshipment events. TCC18 further noted that the IWG-ROP should also consider if any revisions are necessary to TCC18 recommended ROP minimum data fields to be collected by transshipment observers during transshipment events.

35. TCC18 noted the positive development that some observer placements have recommenced on transshipment vessels and some purse seine vessels during the transitional period of 15 June – 1 January 2023.

36. The Online Discussion Forum was also used to support advance consideration of some matters that were considered under Agenda 10, Other Matters of the TCC agenda. TCC18 considered SC18 recommended draft Graphics to illustrate the Best Handling Practices for the Safe Handling and Release of Cetaceans and endorsed their adoption by the Commission at WCPFC19. TCC18 considered SC18 recommendations related to biodegradable FADs as

prepared by the FAD Management Options IWG. TCC18 recommended that the online discussion forum continue to be used in future meetings.

37. In regard to the Shark CMM, TCC18 considered the issue that there is a gap between the dates in the review clause for alternatives to paragraph 7 of CMM 2019-04, and the applicable dates specified in paragraph 8 and 9 of CMM 2019-04. TCC18 recommended that the Commission at WCPFC19 amend CMM 2019-04 so that the obligation that CCMs require their vessels to land sharks with fins naturally attached and the supporting measures which ensure that individual shark carcasses and their corresponding fins can be easily identified on board the vessel at any time, continue to apply in 2023.

38. TCC18 commended the Secretariat for its excellent work and noted the intention of the Secretariat to work intersessionally to prepare additional information about the preliminary forecast of future work commitments of the Secretariat's MCS and Compliance Programme to acquire the appropriate level of resources to support implementation of the TCC workplan 2022 – 2024 and to support Commission directives. As noted by TCC18, the TCC Workplan 2022 – 2024 is expected to be updated intersessionally through work led by the TCC Vice-Chair, and an update will be provided to WCPFC19.

39. The Outcomes Document for TCC18 containing all the decisions adopted at TCC18 was published and posted within the requisite time after the meeting. The full summary report of the meeting will be posted on the Commission website by the time of WCPFC19 and the outcomes and recommendations of TCC18 will be discussed at WCPFC19. The draft Compliance Monitoring Report documentation is available to CCMs and their authorized users through the WCPFC intranet and a copy has also been posted on the secure side of the WCPFC website. In accordance with CMM 2021-03 paragraph 41, the Secretariat will table a summary of updates to the draft Compliance Monitoring Report on the Commission website by the time of WCPFC19.

2.6 The Finance and Administration Committee

40. The Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) is responsible for reviewing and advising the Commission on its budget and other financial and administrative requirements.

41. In 2021, the fifteenth regular session of FAC (FAC15) was held online immediately prior to and during the WCPFC18 meeting. FAC15 was chaired by Mr. Michael Brakke (USA), and its key outcomes included, inter alia:

- a) Recommended the acceptance of the Auditor's Report for 2020 and General Account Fund Financial Statements;
- b) Noted the financial reports on income and trust funds report provided by the Secretariat for 2022; and
- c) Recommended approval of a \$8,309,136 budget for the Commission for 2022.

42. The sixteenth regular session of FAC (FAC16) for this year will be held immediately prior to and as necessary during the WCPFC19. The current FAC Co-Chairs are Mr. David Power (Australia) and Mr. Michael Brakke (USA). As expected, FAC16 will consider the routine matters relating to the work programme and budget of the Commission for 2023, personnel issues and administrative matters relating to the work of the Commission and the Secretariat. The report and outcomes of FAC16 will be presented for discussion and decision at WCPFC19.

2.7 Work of the Intersessional Working Groups

43. This section of the report highlights the work of the various intersessional working groups tasked by the Commission to progress their work in 2022. The update of the work of the intersessional working groups are summarized in the succeeding paragraphs.

a. Compliance Monitoring Scheme Intersessional Working Group

44. The Compliance Monitoring Scheme IWG was established in 2019, under the leadership of the Vice-Chair of TCC, to work virtually to progress work on the CMS Future Work, that are intended to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Compliance Monitoring Scheme (as required by CMM 2021-03 paragraph 46) ([link to CMS IWG page](#)). The Commission at WCPFC18 extended the work of the CMS IWG to 2022/23 and directed that the Compliance Monitoring Report assessment review process, including the review of the aggregate tables, shall be deferred in 2022 so that the TCC can dedicate appropriate time to the completion of CMS Future Work components. The Commission also directed that TCC18 to focus on completing the development of audit points, a risk-based assessment framework and the development of guidelines for observer participation in the CMS and provide recommendations to WCPFC19 to support the Commission's adoption of these work areas. TCC18 was also to continue to consider the process for aggregate tables review, further improvements to the online Compliance Case File System (CCFS), and the other components of the CMS Future Work.

45. On 31 May 2022, an [updated workplan](#) for the CMS-IWG was circulated by the Vice-Chair of TCC, Ms Emily Crigler, which considered CCMs comments received on a version of the workplan that was issued in April 2022. The updated workplan also duly considered the approach to the Commission's Compliance Monitoring Scheme in 2022 and 2023, as agreed by the Commission at WCPFC18. The objective of the workplan is to develop a clear timeline of the anticipated work of the CMS IWG to complete the tasks included in the CMS future work plan, as outlined in Section IX of CMM 2021-03. Also circulated on 31 May 2022 was a paper providing [draft Audit Points](#) prepared by the CMS-IWG Lead on Audit Points, Ms Rhea Moss-Christian, and a Risk Based Assessment Framework [Discussion Paper](#) with a supporting spreadsheet file prepared by CMS-IWG Lead on RBAF, Ms Heather Ward.

46. Five working papers related to the CMS-IWG workplan activities were presented to TCC18, namely:

- a) WCPFC Compliance Monitoring Scheme Audit Points - [Supplementary Draft](#), prepared by the CMS-IWG Lead on Audit Points;
- b) A [risk-based framework](#) for the WCPFC Compliance Monitoring Scheme, CMS-IWG Lead on RBAF;
- c) A CMS-IWG [paper](#) in response to TCC17 recommendation on WCPFC data rules, prepared by the TCC Vice-Chair and Secretariat;
- d) CMS Aggregate Tables - [Discussion Paper](#), prepared by the TCC Chair; and
- e) An [update](#) on improvements to the CCFS and proposed approaches for receiving CCM feedback, prepared by the Secretariat.

47. The work by the CMS-IWG Leads and the Secretariat supported several TCC18 recommendations to WCPFC19 related to the CMS Future Work tasks as reported in section 2.5 above.

48. A progress report on the CMS-IWG activities will be provided to WCPFC19 by the TCC Vice Chair. As noted by TCC18, progress reports related to CMS Audit Points and CMS Aggregate Tables are also expected to be provided by the respective Leads to WCPFC19.

b. Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring Working Group

49. The Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring Working Group was established in 2014 to consider how electronic monitoring and electronic reporting technologies could benefit the work of CCMs and the Commission, in supporting the objective and implementation of the Convention ([link to ER and EM WG page](#)). The work over prior years had focused on the development of e-reporting standards, and since 2018 the focus has shifted to e-monitoring. The Commission at WCPFC18 noted the importance of progressing Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring work in 2022 and confirmed that Australia would continue to lead the IWG. In February 2022, Australia nominated Ms Claire van der Geest to lead the IWG and the Chair provided a [communication](#) noting that the focus of planned activities in 2022 will be the development of the Electronic Monitoring Standards and providing advice to the Commission about the priorities for electronic reporting and electronic monitoring. In April 2022, comments were sought via email on [draft Standards, Specifications and Procedures](#) for WCPFC Electronic Monitoring Program.

50. On July 19 and 20, 2022, the [5th Meeting](#) of the Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring Working Group was convened. The Meeting considered a discussion paper prepared by the Chair presenting a concept and vision for how the WCPFC Regional Electronic Monitoring Programme can work in concert with existing data collection and monitoring tools, specifically the Regional Observer Programme, to support the delivery of the WCPFC Fisheries Management Framework. TCC18 received a [report of progress](#) in the form of the Chair's Summary Report of the 5th Meeting, which included recommended amendments to the TCC workplan 2022 – 2024 to support the timely progression of the WCPFC Regional Electronic Monitoring Programme. A progress report will be provided to WCPFC19.

c. FAD Management Option Intersessional Working Group

51. The Chair of the FAD Management Options Intersessional Working Group (FADMO-IWG) Mr. Jamel James (FSM), with assistance from the Secretariat, prepared a paper related to *Preliminary Review of Available Information on Biodegradable FADs* for SC18 ([SC18-EB-IP-13](#)) and for TCC18 ([TCC18-2022-25](#)) to progress the work of the FADMO-IWG, noting that the Commission tasked the Scientific Committee to provide specific recommendations as in Paragraph 19², CMM 2021-01. The paper was posted on the online discussion forum of both SC18 and TCC18.

² 19. *The Scientific Committee shall continue to review research results on the use of biodegradable material on FADs and shall provide specific recommendations to the Commission in 2022 including on a definition of biodegradable FADs, a timeline for the stepwise introduction of biodegradable FADs, potential gaps/needs and any other relevant information.*

52. In response to the specific tasking SC18 undertook the following actions:
- a) supported the definition of “biodegradable” and several preliminary categories of biodegradable FADs to be considered for its gradual implementation as stated in paragraph 10, SC18-EP-IP-13;
 - b) noted that these categories are preliminary and will be further examined by the FADMO-IWG, SC, TCC for Commission’s consideration; and
 - c) recommended to the Commission that the FADMO-IWG continues its work on exploring a timeline for the stepwise introduction of biodegradable FADs, potential gaps/needs and any other relevant information for Commission’s consideration.
53. TCC18, likewise in response to the specific tasking:
- a) supported the SC18 recommendations related to biodegradable FADs as detailed in supporting paper TCC18-2022-25;
 - b) recommended that WCPFC19 endorse the interpretation of paragraph 17 of CMM 2021-01 as presented by the FAD Management Options IWG Chair in the TCC18 ODF Summary Report ([TCC18-2022-05](#)): “paragraph 17 prohibits deploying FADs with mesh net after 1 January 2024.”; and
 - c) noted the need to revisit the ROP minimum data fields related to FADs, particularly monitoring of non-entangling and biodegradable FADs implementation in the future, to improve data quality in this area. TCC18 recommended that if the IWG-ROP is reactivated that it be tasked to undertake this work.

d. SP Albacore Roadmap Intersessional Working Group

54. The South Pacific Albacore Roadmap Intersessional Working Group (SPALRM-IWG) met electronically on 15th July 2022. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Neomai Ravitu (Fiji). The Chair noted the priorities for the IWG as recorded in Paragraphs 183 and 194 of the WCPFC18 Summary Report, to get clear directions from IWG participants on the interim TRP, the management procedures for SP albacore harvest strategy, total allowable catch, and the new and enhanced conservation management measure. The general outcomes from the IWG meeting included amendments to the 2022 work plan detailed in Annexes D and E of the [Chair’s Summary Report of the South Pacific Albacore Roadmap IWG Meeting](#).

e. Intersessional Working Group to review CMM 2009-06 (Transshipment CMM)

55. The IWG to review CMM 2009-06 was established in 2018 ([link to the IWG page](#)). In 2022 the work of the IWG continued to be led by the co-chairs Mr. Felix Toa Ngwango (Vanuatu) and Dr. Alex Kahl (United States). TCC18 received a [report of progress](#) which included a discussion paper related to establishing ROP minimum standard data fields for transshipment at sea. In the margins of TCC18, the co-chairs facilitated a small working group session, and its outcomes supported TCC18 recommending that the Commission adopt ROP data fields to be collected by transshipment observers during transshipment events. TCC18 also requested that the Secretariat report on the implementation of observer reporting of transshipments for WCPFC19. In support of the IWG, the Secretariat and the SSP were tasked to progress work that analyses transshipment information to support the review of the Transshipment Measure (CMM 2009-06). An update on the expected timelines to complete the analytical work and on the future workplan for the IWG is expected to be provided to WCPFC19.

f. Intersessional work on improving labour standards for crew on fishing vessels

56. The Commission at WCPFC18 supported the continuation of intersessional work which had commenced in 2021 to improve labour standards for crew on fishing vessels ([link to labour standards page](#)). From April to July 2022, the co-Chairs Ms Putuh Suadela (Indonesia) and Ms Sarah McAvinchey (New Zealand) facilitated electronic exchanges on a draft proposed conservation and management measure on labour standards, which was supported through the WCPFC Online Discussion Forum. On July 27, 2022, a [Workshop on Labour Standards for Crew on Fishing Vessels](#) was convened. TCC18 received a [report of progress](#) which included a further revised draft CMM. In the margins of TCC18, the co-chairs facilitated a small working group session which discussed the three main topics: scope of the measure; roles and responsibilities for port CCM, flag CCM, vessel owner/operator, and crewing agency; and status of the crew agreement. TCC18 noted the updated proposal and the plans by the co-chairs to hold a virtual intersessional working and to prepare a proposal for WCPFC19. In early November, a 3rd Workshop on Labour Standards for Crew on Fishing Vessels will be convened. A progress report will be provided to WCPFC19.

2.8 Future Work of the Commission and Subsidiary Bodies

57. Without preempting the outcomes of the annual WCPFC19 at the end of the year, and with increased confidence that physical meetings will resume in 2023, the issues listed below will feature predominantly in the work of the Commission and the Secretariat in 2023 and onward years:

- a) negotiations of a tropical tuna measure, including para 27 and 41 (allocation and hard limits);
- b) implementation of a new CMM for NP Swordfish;
- c) ongoing reforms to enhance the CMS;
- d) development of the draft CMR2023 and assessment of both CMR 2022 (covering 2021 activities) and CMR2023 (covering 2022 activities);
- e) progressing the implementation of the updated indicative work plan for the adoption of harvest strategies under CMM 2014-06;
- f) Implementation of yellowfin tuna peer review outcomes, and continuing work to develop the new ensemble approach to characterize stock status uncertainty;
- g) Stock assessment for yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna, and initial work following up on skipjack assessment recommendations;
- h) continuing the rebuilding of the Pacific bluefin tuna stock and developing a Catch Documentation Scheme for Pacific bluefin tuna;
- i) development and testing of Ecosystem and Climate Indicators;
- j) resumption of 100% observer coverage on purse seine vessels;
- k) ongoing upgrades to the Information Management Technology System, particularly the remaining externally facing WCPFC ICT application system that rely on SharePoint platform; and
- l) continuation of the work of the various intersessional working groups, in particular around the development of electronic-monitoring standards, review of the Transshipment CMM, potential improvements to the ROP Minimum Standard Data Fields and priorities for electronic-reporting standards, FAD Management and South Pacific Albacore management.

3. WORK OF THE SECRETARIAT

3.1 *Annual overview*

58. As noted earlier, the work of the Secretariat in 2022 continued to be challenged by the disruptions caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic, despite the easing of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic globally and the lifting of international travel restrictions around the world. As a consequence, most if not all of the work and business of the Secretariat was transacted through virtual and online mode of communications. The work of the Secretariat was severely hampered by the arrival of the COVID-19 virus in Pohnpei in July that required the Secretariat office to be closed for several weeks. Fortunately, for staff residing on Pohnpei all of them were fully vaccinated with some having had their booster shots, so the direct health impact on staff was minimal but still unsettling. As the COVID-19 infection levels subsided, Pohnpei was plagued by a severe bout of influenza resulting in many staff unwell to turn up at work or were compelled to remain at home to look after unwell family members. The general assessment, from a health perspective, was that the influenza had a more severe impact than the COVID-19 strand that reached Pohnpei. Unfortunately, all these disruptions were during the lead up period to the TCC18 meeting and did affect the timely provision of some of the meeting document but didn't diminish the success of the TCC18 meeting and its outcomes. Also, during this period, some of the staff were working remotely from abroad which added to the burden of efficient coordination and management of support services to the online meetings. At the date of this report, all staff that had been working from abroad are expected to return to Pohnpei during the month of October.

59. Despite the challenges noted above, the Secretariat has a reasonably successful year. Some of the Secretariat's key successes included, inter alia:

- a) successfully serviced and supported the online meetings of the Commission and subsidiary bodies namely WCPFC-SS4-2022; the SC18; the SMD01; the TCC18; the CDS Technical Meeting for PBF; Joint IATTC-NC WG on PBF Management; and NC18;
- b) successfully supported the meeting and work of intersessional working groups on the CMS-Future Work, SPA management, FAD management, electronic reporting and monitoring, Transshipment review, and crew labour standards;
- c) delivered on time the draft compliance monitoring report 2022 covering activities in 2021;
- d) supported increasing MCS activities of members by processing Member's non-public domain data requests;
- e) launched an upgraded Compliance Case File System and commenced work towards the necessary migration of the RFV systems, Charter Notifications, VTAF management and MTU audits from Sharepoint for completion in the first quarter of 2023;
- f) Commenced work to enhance the Secretariat's analytical capacity with initial success as demonstrated by several routine annual reports prepared for TCC18 of the various MCS; and
- g) completion of the independent audit report for financial accounts of 2021 despite delays for Auditor to visit the Secretariat offices.

3.2 Implementation of the Secretariat Corporate Plan

60. The tables below detail the activities and outputs of the Secretariat in 2022, against the Goals and Objectives of the WCPFC Secretariat Corporate Plan 2020-2023, as acknowledged at WCPFC16 as an internal living planning document to guide the work of the Secretariat (see [WCPFC-2019-32](#) and <https://www.wcpfc.int/wcpfc-secretariat-corporate-plan>).

Goal 1: To provide efficient and effective administrative support to the WCPFC	
Objective 1.1 Provide secretariat services to the WCPFC and its meetings using internationally recognised standards and best practices	
Activities	Annual Outputs
1.1.1 Develop a budget for the Commission. 1.1.2 Facilitate and support the implementation of Commission decisions and tasks for the Secretariat. 1.1.3 Organise all the meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. 1.1.4 Efficiently and effectively manage the funds and assets of the Commission. 1.1.5 Prepare annual reports on the activities of the Commission and the Secretariat. 1.1.6 Facilitate external audits of the financial records of the Commission. 1.1.7 Manage official communications and circulars from and to CCMs and stakeholders. 1.1.8 Maintain lists of official contacts for CCMs and stakeholders. 1.1.9 Develop and maintain online meeting protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual budget for 2023 to be posted in October 2022 and discussed at FAC16 and WCPFC19. ▪ Online meetings were successfully convened for WCPFC-SS4-2022, SC18, SMD01, TCC18, NC18, and intersessional WGs. ▪ Official communications and circulars properly maintained on www.wcpfc.int. ▪ Updated Official contact list. ▪ The 2022 Annual Report of the Executive Director on WCPFC MCS and compliance tools tabled and discussed at TCC18. ▪ The 2022 Annual Report of the Executive Director to be tabled at WCPFC19. ▪ Auditor's Report for 2021 and General Account Fund Financial Statements was issued on 12 October for consideration at FAC16 and WCPFC19.
<p>Summary of annual activities under Objective 1.1</p> <p>Despite the continued disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2022, the Secretariat successfully supported and serviced the online meetings of the WCPFC-SS4-2022, SC18, SMD01, TCC18, NC18, and the various intersessional working groups. The successful outcomes of those meetings as described in other sections of the report bear testament to the quality of the secretariat services rendered by the Secretariat in support of those meetings. Those outcomes now provide the basis to inform the discussions and decision of the Commission at WCPFC19 at end of the year. At the date of the report, the Secretariat is preparing for a physical meeting for the WCPFC19 in Da Nang, Vietnam, the first since the outbreak of the pandemic in early 2020. The meeting will also permit delegations unable to attend physically to participate virtually.</p> <p>The financial affairs of the Commission continued to be managed in accordance with its financial regulations and applicable rules. Although the conduct of the audit of the financial statements and accounts for the year ending 31 December 2021 was delayed</p>	

significantly due to travel difficulties for officials of the Independent Auditor to visit the Secretariat office and other operational challenges the Auditor's office encountered, the audit report was issued on 12 October 2022 and circulated to Members for their review in advance of WCPFC19. The Auditor reported that the statements and accounts compiled for 2021 were compliant with the required accounting standards as well as the Commission's Financial Regulations and presented a fair view of the financial position of the Commission. The Auditor's report will be presented for the collective review of FAC15 and the Commission at WCPFC19 in December 2022.

The Secretariat continued to manage and maintain the Commission assets and properties, in particular the Commission headquarters office, in good conditions by instituting a regular maintenance programme. It also continued to implement its green policy to ensure minimal or nil impact of its operations on the environment. The use of solar panels has resulted in saving on electricity bills to the tune of \$88,000.

The Secretariat was able to comply with its reporting obligations on its operations and functions. This annual report for 2022 by the Executive Director was provided on time as required, so as the Executive Director Report on the performance and status of the various MCS and compliance tools including the Record of Fishing Vessels, High Seas Boarding and Inspection, the Vessels Monitoring System, Regional Observer Programme, Transshipment and the Data Access Rules and Procedure to name but a few of those tools.

Objective 1.2

Ensure an effective, open, harmonious, and inclusive Secretariat

Activities	Annual Outputs
1.2.1 Prepare and implement Secretariat work plans in support of Commission activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Secretariat undertook a refresh of its Corporate Plan 2020 – 2023. ▪ Implementation of the Corporate Plan is reported through this Annual Report. ▪ Maintenance of an undated COVID-19 Response Strategy. ▪ Office closed for weeks during outbreak of the COVID-19 virus in Pohnpei and a severe influenza to safeguard the health of staff. ▪ 1 support staff members was supported under the staff training budget. ▪ Assessment under the Policy for the Award of Performance Bonuses will be done in November 2022, and 5 were awarded such bonuses in 2021. ▪ Annual staff performance appraisals undertaken on time with award of increments as required.
1.2.2 Implement performance monitoring and evaluation of Secretariat staff and activities.	
1.2.3 Implement the Human Resources Management and Development Strategy to ensure the attraction and retention of high-performing employees.	
1.2.4 Address health and safety issues.	
1.2.5 Ensure continued staff development and training, in particular, locally recruited staff.	
1.2.6 Regular review of Secretariat's Corporate Plan.	

Summary of annual activities under Objective 1.2

The Secretariat Corporate Plan 2020 – 2023 continued to serve well the Secretariat as reflected in this section of this Annual Report. With three years in operation, the

Secretariat undertook a refresh of the Corporate Plan, with the updated plan with adjustments to be tabled for information at the WCPFC19 meeting.

The COVID-19 virus (the omicron strand) was detected and transmitted in the community in Pohnpei in July. There was initial panic and disarray but fortunately the impact on the health of staff and their family members was minimal. Fortunately, all staff residing on Pohnpei at the time were all fully vaccinated with some having had their booster shots and were well protected from the severe impacts of the infection. As a precaution, and in accordance with the Secretariat COVID-19 Response Strategy, the office was closed for several weeks, and staff were required to work, if able, from their homes. As the virus infection rate subsided, Pohnpei was plagued by a severe bout of influenza which proved to be more impactful than the virus and the office was closed for a week to allow staff to recover from the influenza and to cater for their affected family members.

The Secretariat annual staff performance appraisal programme continued in 2022 and those staff that were assessed to have performed satisfactorily and have not reached the limit of their salary scales were awarded annual increments. For staff that have reached the limit of their salary scales they are not entitled to any further salary increment. In the case of support staff, a performance bonus is on offer if their performances are assessed to be highly satisfactory. In 2021, 5 support staff were awarded the bonus. The assessment for the performance bonus is done in November each year.

The Commission budget for 2022 includes a staff training provision and 1 support staff benefitted from this assistance in 2021 to pursue staff development courses with course fees met from this budgetary provision.

With the easing of international travel restrictions, most of the professional staff were able to take up their home leave in 2022 after more than 2 years. However, due to border closures in Pohnpei, FSM several professional staff were required to work remotely from their home stations. With the lifting of border closures for Pohnpei, all staff stranded abroad would return to Pohnpei by the month of October.

Goal 2: To manage the provision of technical, scientific, and compliance information and advice to the WCPFC

Objective 2.1

Efficiently administer the WCPFC's MCS and Compliance programme and activities

Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>2.1.1 Serve as the Secretariat to the TCC and its Working Groups, including providing support to the annual compliance monitoring scheme processes and discussion of MCS and Compliance related matters.</p> <p>2.1.2 Administer the technical operation of the Commission's agreed arrangements for monitoring, control and surveillance which include <i>inter alia</i> the Commission's Record of Fishing Vessels, Vessel Monitoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The online TCC18 was successfully convened with its Outcomes Document issued on time and the Summary Report to be finalised before WCPFC19. ▪ Required annual reports on the Commission's MCS tools were tabled at TCC18 with an overview report provided through the Executive Directors Overview Report of the WCPFC MCS and Compliance Programmes.

<p>System, Regional Observer Programme, IUU Vessel List, High Seas Boarding and Inspection Scheme, Monitoring of high seas transshipment activities, Minimum Standards for Port Inspections, and administration of data access rules and procedures.</p> <p>2.1.3 Prepare a draft Compliance Monitoring Report concerning each CCM and collective obligations for review by the TCC, that incorporates information submitted by CCMs and records the final compliance assessments adopted by the Commission each year.</p> <p>2.1.4 Prepare and maintain online annual reporting and compliance monitoring reporting systems for use by Members to fulfil Commission reporting requirements.</p> <p>2.1.5 Maintain the WCPFC online compliance case file system as a secure, searchable system to store, manage and make available information to assist relevant CCMs with tracking alleged violations by vessels, and as decided by the Commission.</p> <p>2.1.6 Compile, analyse and disseminate MCS related data and information on Member's compliance and fisheries management programs, and convey that advice to CCMs.</p> <p>2.1.7 Research new and emerging technologies and procedures that will enhance the Commission's MCS efforts and Members annual reporting to the Commission.</p> <p>2.1.8 Implement other approved TCC-related activities including provision of technical advice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initial positive results from the multi-year program of support to enhance the Secretariat's analytical capacity. ▪ Upgraded WCPFC online Compliance Case File System (CCFS) launched in March 2022. ▪ Upgrades to Information systems for the RFV, Charter Notifications and VMS VTAF provided to TCC18. ▪ The Annual Report Part 2 issued two months in advance of due date. ▪ SPC-OFP continued delivery of the ACE tables to support the CMS. ▪ Timely issuance of draft 2022 CMR. ▪ The aggregated summary tables produced from the CCFS released on 28 July. ▪ Guidance to CCMs for Annual Report Part 2, online CCFS and CMRs was enhanced through the 'WCPFC Helpdesk'. ▪ Provision of reference and analytical documents to facilitate the priority work of the TCC18. ▪ The WCPFC CMS webpages (www.wcpfc.int/compliance-monitoring) were maintained and updated.
<p>Summary of annual activities under Objective 2.1</p> <p>An overview report of the WCPFC MCS activities was tabled at TCC18 in the Executive Director's Overview Report of the WCPFC MCS and Compliance Programmes. The report documents the progress of the MCS and Compliance Programme in 2022. The report was supplemented by separate individual reports to be found on the TCC18 meeting webpage on each of the MCS tools including the IUU Vessel List, CNM requests for 2023, VMS, ROP, Transshipment reporting, HSBI, Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV), EHSP special management area, Port inspections and minimum standards for Port state measures, administration of data access rules and procedures, performance of the e-reporting standards.</p>	

Despite, the COVID-19 disruptions, the Secretariat continued to successfully support the work and activities of the WCPFC's MCS and Compliance programme in 2022.

Notably, several of the routine annual reports prepared for TCC18 of the various MCS tools positively demonstrate the initial results from the multi-year program to enhance the Secretariat's analytical capacity. In 2022, the Secretariat also successfully delivered an updated CCFS system for CCMs and commenced work to complete the necessary Information Systems upgrades for the Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV), Charter Notifications, WCPFC VMS VTAF management and MTU audits.

The CMS is continued to provide the platform for the TCC to undertake its key task of assessing the compliance performance of CCMs of their obligations under the WCPFC Convention and CMMs. The CMS is also supported by an integrated network of MCS tools and data collection programmes that furnish the relevant data and information to the development and consideration of the CMR by the TCC. In 2022, the Commission had directed TCC to focus efforts on reforms to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the CMS. The CMS-IWG led preparations for the reforms and outcomes from TCC18 ensured good progress for final consideration and decision by the Commission at WCPFC19.

The CMS continues to be at the core of the work of the Secretariat's MCS and Compliance Programme. This year's CMR required many additional hours of work by the Secretariat. In 2023, to effectively support the CMS process, the Secretariat is forecasting an increased workload load to support TCC19 consideration of draft CMRs covering activities across two consecutive years. There are also additional tasks that TCC18 recommended that the Commission task the Secretariat in 2023 to support the continued CMS reforms. Additional short-term resources from early 2023 for the Secretariat will be required to support the Secretariat deliver on that front.

With the expected reforms to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the CMS nearing completion, the Secretariat continues to forecast that continued enhancements to the Information Management Technology System of the Secretariat will still be necessary, and it is noted that there continues to be ongoing work towards that objective. The CMS reforms are forecast to also require sustained commitments in supporting enhanced analytical capacity for the Secretariat for at least the next couple of years.

The Secretariat's MCS and Compliance Programme was able to deliver its core functions despite some ongoing challenges associated with disruption caused by global COVID-19 pandemic. This year's TCC preparations also confirmed the findings of the previous year's forecast planning exercises, that although priority project work was being routinely delivered by the Secretariat, the Secretariat's capacity to sustain the workload was severely challenged and was not assisted by the pandemic disruptions. In particular, preparations leading up to the TCC18 meeting was disrupted by the arrival of the pandemic in Pohnpei in July that resulted in the closure of the office for several week followed by the outbreak of a severe influenza. Most of the key personnel of the MCS and Compliance programme were working remotely from various stations abroad.

Despite the challenges encountered, the TCC18 commended the Secretariat for its excellent work and noted the intention of the Secretariat to work intersessionally to prepare additional information about the preliminary forecast of future work commitments of the Secretariat's MCS and Compliance Programme to acquire the appropriate level of resources to support implementation of the TCC workplan 2022 – 2024 and other Commission directives. The Secretariat continues to be open to consideration of any forms of resources support including short term consultancies, secondment, or in-kind support. The Secretariat looks forward to continuing discussing those resource implications.

Objective 2.2

Efficiently administer the WCPFC's Science programme and activities

Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>2.2.1 Serve as the Secretariat to the Scientific Committee and its Working Groups.</p> <p>2.2.2 Facilitate and assist the Scientific Committee in the provision and discussion of its report to the Commission on the best available scientific information and advice on the conservation and management of the stocks.</p> <p>2.2.3 Assist with the development and submission to the Commission of workplan and budget for the Science Programme.</p> <p>2.2.4 Administer and monitor the approved science programmes and activities.</p> <p>2.2.5 Facilitate the provision of support to the implementation of the Harvest Strategy Work Plan.</p> <p>2.2.6 Manage relations with the Scientific Services Provider and other scientific experts.</p> <p>2.2.7 Expand intersessional activities to support effective implementation of science programmes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successful completion of the online SC18 meeting. ▪ Timely distribution of SC18 Outcomes Document and SC Summary Report. ▪ Submission to the WCPFC19 of SC approved 2023-2025 work program and budget. ▪ The Secretariat completed the annual services agreement with SPC-OFP. ▪ All SC projects were progressed with project reports posted for SC18's review. ▪ Maintenance of webpage for Harvest Strategy and supported SPC's harvest strategy related activities. ▪ The first Science-Management Dialogue meeting was successfully convened. ▪ Continued maintenance of relations with the SPC-OFP, ISC and other science agencies. ▪ Supported other intersessional science related activities.
<p>Summary of annual activities under Objective 2.2</p> <p>The online SC18 meeting was successfully held and delivered the desired outcomes. The Secretariat coordinated preparations for SC18, including the development of the agenda and meeting documentation in collaboration with the SSP, the SC Chair and the Theme Conveners, and the processing of meeting papers and documentation. It also supported the Chair and Theme Conveners in arranging and posting of drafts recommendations. After the meeting, the Secretariat organised the timely publication of the <i>SC18 Outcomes Document</i> and the <i>Draft SC18 Summary Report</i> with an Executive Summary distributed for participants review and comments. The SC18 outcomes will be tabled for consideration at WCPFC19.</p> <p>The Secretariat finalised its annual scientific services agreement with the SSP early in the year to prescribe the services expected of the SSP in 2022. Such services included the production of around 60 papers and reports for SC18. Other activities of the science programme were also supported by ISC, CSIRO, other agencies, and member countries in 2022. Over a hundred papers and documents were posted to the SC18 webpage including the Online Discussion Forum to support discussions at SC18.</p> <p>The Secretariat managed the compilation of all SC projects proposed by the SSP and CCMs by collating CCM priority ranking scores and finalized the list of projects for the work program and budget for 2023-2025 for the Commission's review and endorsement. The list of projects recommended to WCPFC19 includes the SSP annual scientific services, Pacific Marine Specimen Bank and Pacific Tuna Tagging Project as essential activities; and 14 on-going and new projects that will be reviewed at SC19 subject to the Commission's funding support.</p>	

The Secretariat managed the implementation and progression of SC projects in 2022 by developing project contracts with terms of reference. Project reports were posted on the SC18 website and the Online Discussion Forum for discussions facilitated by the authors of the project reports.

The SSP took the lead in developing the WCPFC harvest strategy framework, and the Secretariat provided support where needed. As part of the first Science-Management Dialogue, the Secretariat, in collaboration with the SSP, convened two Harvest Strategy Capacity Building Seminars to enhance CCMs' understanding in the technical aspects of the harvest strategy framework. The Secretariat also organized the convening of the first Science-Management Dialogue meeting, including the development of the agenda, documentation for the dialogue and the production and publication of the meeting outcomes and report. The Secretariat continued to maintain and update a dedicated webpage on its website that tracks the progress in the implementation of the Harvest Strategy Workplan.

The Secretariat continued to collaborate not only with the SSP but also with ISC, CSIRO and CCMs. It collaborated with the SSP in other activities including assisting with the Pre-assessment Workshop, annual Tuna Data Review Workshop, the PTTP Advisory Committee meeting, and the provision of scientific information to the meeting of Commission and its subsidiary. It collaborated with the ISC for data sharing and provision of ISC's scientific information on tuna and tuna-like species in the North Pacific Ocean. It also collaborated with the CSIRO for their implementation of SC projects, especially in relation to biological research, such as the Close-Kin Mark-Recapture project. The Secretariat also supported the implementation of the EU's voluntary contribution to the science work of the Commission and assisted the finalization of contracts with the SSP.

The Science programme of the Secretariat supported other intersessional activities of the Commission including the work of the FADMO-IWG and the SPA Roadmap IWG meeting, and the PTTP Advisory Committee.

Goal 3: To manage the collection and dissemination of data and information relevant to the work of the WCPFC

Objective 3.1

Collect and disseminate relevant data and information to facilitate the work of the WCPFC and its Members in accordance with applicable rules

Activities	Annual Outputs
3.1.1 Collect data and maintain databases for resource assessments and other information needs to support the work of the Commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reports on WCPFC data holdings and data management furnished to SC18 and TCC18.
3.1.2 Develop and manage IT tools and solutions to enhance access to data and information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summaries of requisite annual reporting under CMMs and compilation of data relevant to CMMs furnished to TCC18.
3.1.3 Facilitate consideration by the Commission of emerging and more efficient and cost-effective technologies in data collection and analysis that meet the Commission needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported work of the ERandEM-WG to develop e-reporting and e-monitoring standards. ▪ Report on the Administration of the WCPFC Data Access Rules and Procedures was provided to TCC18.
3.1.4 Administer the collection of quality data from contractors and Members as may be required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Timely processing of WCPFC non-published data requests - 165 requests in 2021, and 82 for 1 Jan to

<p>3.1.5 Administer the collection of compliance, stock assessment and other data from, and dissemination of such data upon request to, national programmes, scientists, compliance managers, other collaborating agencies and industry bodies.</p> <p>3.1.6 Administer the Commission’s Rules and Procedures for the Protection, Access to, and Dissemination of Data.</p>	<p>31 July 2022. Noted a two-fold increase in data requests relative to 2018 – 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilised IT tools to automate extraction and provision of little over 55% of WCPFC data requests.
<p>Summary of annual activities under Objective 3.1</p> <p><i>Data Requests:</i> The TCC required annual report (RP08) on Report on the Administration of the WCPFC Data Access Rules and Procedures confirmed that in 2021/22 the Secretariat has maintained its system of controls over approvals for access to WCPFC data and information. Since 2019, the number of data requests has been increasing with more than 40% of requests now relating to more than one type of non-public domain data, principally VMS and transshipment reports. The only exception to this trend was in 2020 when the impact of COVID-19 caused a decrease in the level of operational MCS activities, particularly port/landing inspections and High Seas Boarding and Inspections.</p> <p>The protocols that could mitigate the risks of COVID-19 transmission to both fishing vessel and inspecting vessel crews took time to develop and operationalized. Since that time, the level of data requests has again increased. COVID-19 related risks appear to have added impetus to the need for broader data analysis to support monitoring and an understanding of vessel activity, leading to an increase in the use of WCPFC data in support of risk assessments for MCS operational planning, high seas boarding and inspections, surveillance patrols and port entry applications for resupply and/or unloading. These latter purposes for data requests are also likely to be the result of increasing emphasis on the application of port state related measures by Pacific Island port CCMs and COVID-19 protocols.</p> <p>During 2021 and 2022 the Secretariat had several discussions with CCMs requesting data to assist them to understand the requirements of WCPFC Data Access Rules and Procedures and the information needed by the Secretariat to support the Executive Director’s consideration and assessment of each request. This has streamlined the process to ensure that the purpose for the data request, the authority of the requester and the parameters for the data are clear. It also allowed the Secretariat to explain any limitations to data access, any Secretariat resourcing implications at the time and to ensure the requested data is made available in the most useful format.</p> <p>Some improvements to Secretariat systems were achieved through work in 2020 and 2021, which were designed to improve the accessibility and use of some data sets or subsets of data. The improvements described below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The new Compliance Case File System (CCFS) has a range of filters to allow members to target the case files of interest including those that are two years or older. The CCFS also has a messaging tool for tracking observer report requests that allows flag states to request observer reports and for the relevant sections of the observer report to be uploaded, or a summary thereof entered, which is immediately accessible to those with authorized access to the case. ii. Work is underway on a new Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV) which aims to simplify access and management of active and historical vessel records for members and non-members as well as the Secretariat. It is anticipated that the new RFV will go live in the first quarter of 2023. 	

- iii. Since 2020, High Seas transshipment e-reporting (TSER) data has been routinely published through each CCMs portal page. This gives flag CCMs access to the high seas transshipment notifications and declarations that have been received by WCPFC for their vessels, including those reports submitted directly into TSER through the TSER APP. The report assists flag CCMs to routinely review and resolve any issues with reporting of high seas transshipment reports, for example missing or late transshipment reports, reducing reliance on the Secretariat's annual review of CCM transshipment reporting. During 2021 and 2022 the Secretariat has worked with some CCMs to familiarize them with the reporting tool.
- iv. The online 'WCPFC Helpdesk', available since late 2020, provides brief information for members on how to access and complete reports, and to access and update some WCPFC datasets ([Helpdesk: WCPFC \(freshdesk.com\)](https://www.freshdesk.com)). These are very short guides with new topics progressively being added as resources permit. The 'Support' link available at the top of each webpage provides a shortcut to the Helpdesk.

Improve Secretariat efficiency in handling data extraction for approved data requests: It should be noted that despite some requests being standing requests for relevant WCPFC data, competing priorities in support of other pressing intersessional TCC-related tasks mean the Secretariat has not been able to schedule the necessary work to develop automated extraction and provision IT tools to support the parameters of common data requests for WCPFC data other than WCPFC VMS and ROP data. Priorities for Secretariat resources in 2022 were focused on the TCC Workplan areas relating to the streamlining of the online CCFS and the development of an improved Record of Fishing Vessels. Consideration is being given to a more efficient mean with which to extract transshipment reports for approved data requests as preparing specific transshipment reports that relate to the parameters of individual requests is a time-consuming manual task for the Secretariat. The volume of data requests means a reporting tool is required.

E-reporting standards: In 2021/22 the uptake of electronic reporting tools in WCPFC is continuing. Some key highlights in 2021/22 were outlined in [TCC18-2022-RP10](#) for each set of E-reporting standards which includes:

- *E-reporting standards for operational catch and effort data adopted in December 2016 (WCPFC13 Summary Report paragraph 584 and Attachment T)*
The submissions of 2021 operational purse seine data that are aligned to the WCPFC E-reporting standards represents 99% coverage (the same as for 2020), and for 2021 operational longline data, represent coverage of 40% (of all 2021 longline data submitted) (down from 44% in 2020).
- *E-reporting standards for observer data adopted in December 2017 (WCPFC14 Summary Report paragraph 401 and Attachment T)*
The submissions of 2021 purse seine observer data held in the WCPFC ROP database that are aligned to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards for observer data represents 100% coverage. The submissions of 2021 longline observer data held in the WCPFC ROP database that are aligned to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards for observer data represents 75% coverage, which is a considerable improvement on 2017 when this coverage level was only 29%, although the longline observer coverage for 2020-21 was lower than in recent years, due to the impacts of COVID-19.

- *Standards for E-reporting of high seas transshipment declarations and transshipment notices adopted in December 2018 (WCPFC15 Summary Report Attachment S)*
Since November 2018 the data entry of high seas transshipment declarations and notices that align to the WCPFC E-reporting standards represent 100% coverage. As is explained in [TCC18-2022-RP10](#) the WCPFC TSER application³ has been used by the Secretariat since November 2018. In addition, the Republic of Korea and Chinese Taipei have been voluntarily using TSER since February 2020 and September 2019 respectively. Since August 2020, the proportion of high seas transshipment declarations and notices that were directly entered by CCMs into the WCPFC E-reporting system has increased to more than 70%.

E-monitoring standards: In 2022, the Secretariat commissioned a consultancy to assist the ERandEMWG Chair in her preparation of the Chair's Discussion [Paper](#) on the WCPFC E-Monitoring Framework. The consultancy took place under the guidance of the ERandEMWG Chair and was funded through the 2022 'E-monitoring and E-reporting activities' budget line.

Objective 3.2

Acquire and maintain reliable, cost-effective and secure IT systems and infrastructure to ensure the integrity of and access to WCPFC data and information

Activities	Annual Outputs
3.2.1 Develop and manage the Commission's information management systems, online compliance reporting tools and electronic reporting systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Secretariat network maintained internal operations and support to Members at more than 99% systems availability. ▪ Initial work on moving content from SharePoint to Drupal started with reference data and the new CCFS completed. ▪ All meetings in 2022 utilised the Online Discussion Forum. ▪ Successful migration of WCPFC email to the Microsoft Azure Cloud. ▪ The Secretariat continue to maintain a fibre optic connection through FSM Telecommunication and a backup satellite connection with Pacific. ▪ A paper on improving the mechanism to verify the integrity of VMS data (and WCPFC IT in general) was tabled at TCC18.
3.2.2 Research new and emerging technologies and procedures to enhance the Commission's capacity in the dissemination and conveyance of data and information.	
3.2.3 Plan for, design, develop and manage the ICT requirements of the Secretariat.	
3.2.4 Provide ICT support to Commission meetings.	
3.2.5 Implement the Commission's Information Security Policy and cyber security program in accordance with internationally recognized standards and best practices.	

Summary of annual activities under Objective 3.2

The Secretariat continued with ongoing enhancements to the WCPFC Information Management System (IMS). Significantly, a new Compliance Case File System (CCFS) was completed and went live during first half of 2022. The new CCFS combines an improved user interface with enhanced alerts and a new messaging tool for supporting

³ The Application was developed by WCPFC to support CCMs implementation of the E-reporting Standards for high seas transshipment declarations and transshipment notices (TSER) is available for CCMs use on Windows, Android and Apple iOS operating systems.

observer report requests. This work leverages off the recent improvements to identity management, security roles and authentication for WCPFC systems.

During the second half of 2022, work has started on an enhanced system to support the Record of Fishing Vessels, associated VMS activation processes and the migration of data from SharePoint to Drupal.

The budgetary provisions of \$100,000 for the IMS developments and \$18,000 for online publishing through the website continue to be used to develop and enhance the IMS databases, for ongoing development to the WCPFC online reporting systems and website support to WCPFC meetings.

The Secretariat acknowledges the ongoing support from IMS contractor Taz-E and website contractor Eighty Options in assisting the Secretariat with the development and ongoing support to the Commissions IMS and associated online IT tools to date. Continued improvements to the Secretariat IMS remains essential to the servicing of the Commission's Technical and Compliance programme.

Goal 4: To support members, cooperating non-members and participating territories to fulfil their obligations to the WCPFC

Objective 4.1

Efficiently administer available WCPFC resources to support Members to fulfil their WCPFC obligations

Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>4.1.1 Coordinate Commission Members and other stakeholders' participation in meetings of the Commission.</p> <p>4.1.2 Administer sustainable financing mechanism under article 30(3) of the WCPFC Convention.</p> <p>4.1.3 Administer Commission's resources designated to build the technical capacity of members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All available CCMs were supported to attend online meetings of WCPFC-SS4-2022, SC18, SMD01, TCC18, NC18, and those of intersessional working groups. ▪ Similar support in place for participation at the physical meeting of FAC16 and WCPFC19. ▪ A report on status of voluntary contributions and trust funds will be presented to FAC16 for onward transmission to WCPFC19. ▪ A dedicated WCPFC website Article 30 page was maintained. ▪ The Secretariat continued to support the JTF and the CTTF in 2022. ▪ The WPEA-ITM project made steady progress in 2022.

Summary of annual activities under Objective 4.1

The Secretariat provided necessary support and guidance to facilitate the participation and engagement of CCMs and observer delegations at the online meetings of the WCPFC-SS4-2022, SC18, SMD01, TCC19, NC19 and the intersessional meetings that met in 2022. At the date of this report, the Secretariat was providing logistical support to facilitate attendance at the physical meetings for FAC16 and WCPFC19 in Vietnam at end of the year. Those that are unable to attend physically will be supported to participate virtually.

The Secretariat Compliance team also provided one-on-one assistance to CCMs in their Annual Reporting, CCFS updates and use of online tools.

The Secretariat continued to manage the Special Requirement Fund for 2022. With the WCPFC19 convened as a physical meeting, it is expected that there would be several funding requests to support additional participation from SIDS. The Secretariat, as required, will also present a report to FAC16 on the status of the various voluntary contributions and trust funds for review and onward transmission to WCPFC18 in December.

The Secretariat continued in 2022 to support the implementation of the Japan Trust Fund (JTF) and the Chinese Taipei Trust Fund (CTTF). The JTF is administered by the Secretariat in coordination with the Japan Fisheries Agency and the available funding for 2022 was USD \$232,821. There were 6 newly approved projects for 2022 from Solomon Island, Tonga and Tuvalu in the areas of training, strengthening of national observer programmes data collection and policy development. The CTTF funded projects from two members and the SPC office aimed strengthening of national observer programmes.

The Secretariat, with the assistance of a Project Manager and SPC, continued 2022 to work closely with the national fisheries agencies of Indonesia, Philippines and Viet Nam, to implement the New Zealand funded Western Pacific East Asia Improved Tuna Monitoring Activity (WPEA-ITM). The Activity with a budget of USD 3.51 million was extended at no cost to March 2023 to utilize underspent funds from the early years of the project and more recently by the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to disrupt implementation of the planned WPEA-ITM activities in the first half of 2022, but then travel restrictions in the region started to ease mid-year and much needed and appreciated in country work resumed (see [SC18-RP-WPEA-01](#)). Importantly though, critical national tuna data collection programs have continued with enumerators despite the disruptions, and port sampling continued in all three countries with support of the project. Other critical activities, such as the annual catch estimates workshops were progressed either remotely, in-person or using a combination of both. All three countries met their WCPFC reporting obligations, with the submission of their provisional data to WCPFC on time, and the data audits have shown a continued improvement in data quality and quantity.

A Mid-Term Evaluation of the WPEA-ITM was completed in November 2021 and presented to the Steering Committee. Key findings included a strong level of national ownership and direct relevance of the Activity to national initiatives, the NZ international engagement strategy, and the work of the WCPFC. It was recognised that the Activity had experienced a stuttered start, but the choice of the WCPFC Secretariat as the implementing agency and SPC as a partner, had benefited the efficiency of the Activity's implementation. The evaluation found that the Activity had supported the three participating countries to improve their national systems and processes, to meet their data obligations and to improve the quality and scope of data provided to the Commission. These, together with a few additional impacts, had built national capacity, improved the data available to the Commission, and reduced uncertainties in the data available for WCPFC stock assessments. The evaluation recommended that due to the underspend resulting from pandemic delays that extension beyond March 2023 into 2024 be considered and recommended the preparation of exit strategies for each country and planning for support of critical activities beyond the WPEA-ITM. The WPEA-ITM team is currently working with the New Zealand donors to process extension of the project. This

will be formalised at the annual project Steering Committee meeting to be held early in 2023.	
Objective 4.2 Provide and facilitate the provision of technical support and assistance to Members to assist them to fulfil their WCPFC obligations	
Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>4.2.1 Provide technical assistance to members on MCS and annual reporting requirements as requested.</p> <p>4.2.2 Support efforts, including training, to build national technical capacity to enable members to fulfil their obligations to the Commission.</p> <p>4.2.3 Maintain the Strategic Investment Plan and Article 30 webpage on the Commission website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ List of Capacity Assistance Requests and Capacity Development Plans were extracted from CCM's Annual Report Part 2 and the draft CMRs - WCPFC-TCC18-2022-08. ▪ The Strategic Investment Plan for the Special Requirement Fund was updated. ▪ Guidance to CCMs for Annual Report Part 2, online CCFS and CMRs was enhanced through the 'WCPFC Helpdesk'. ▪ Updated and well maintained WCPFC website calendar.
<p>Summary of annual activities under Objective 4.2</p> <p>Throughout 2021/22 the Secretariat continued to assist individual CCMs, on request, with WCPFC reporting requirements, including Annual Report Part 1 and Part 2, online Compliance Case File System guidance, and use of the WCPFC High Seas Transshipment E-Reporting (TSER) system and VMS Reporting Status Tool (VRST). Such assistance from the Secretariat seems to be helpful in circumstances where a CCM national administrations has changes in staff who are involved in supporting WCPFC matters or where a better understanding of how to use the WCPFC online systems can assist in more efficient processes for CCMs. This will continue into the next year as CCMs continue to familiarize themselves with the online systems and the changes being made to improve its usefulness and ease of use based on CCM feedback.</p> <p>The 'WCPFC Helpdesk' was available since late 2020 also provides brief reference information for members on how to access and complete reports and to access and make updates to some WCPFC datasets (WCPFC Helpdesk). These are very short guides with new topics progressively being added as resources permit.</p> <p>The Secretariat continued to support observer and de-briefer trainings, and assistance was given on request to help CCM programmes with observer training and VMS training. The Secretariat continued to provide advice to national and sub-regional agencies in relation to Commission MCS programme matters, RFV and charter notification updates, transshipment reporting queries, Commission minimum standards and related issues and WCPFC data request procedures.</p>	

Goal 5: To promote awareness and publicise the work of the WCPFC	
Objective 5.1 Effectively raise awareness of the WCPFC and its initiatives	
Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>5.1.1 Implement a communication strategy to promote awareness of the work of the Commission.</p> <p>5.1.2 Represent the Commission at regional and international meetings and other forums.</p> <p>5.1.3 Maintain close collaborations with international and regional organisations and RFMOs in particular the tuna-RFMOs and those with management mandate within the Pacific Ocean.</p> <p>5.1.4 Maintain regular communications with members and stakeholders through official circulars and regular country visits.</p> <p>5.1.5 Entertain regular visits by members and stakeholders to the Commission head office.</p> <p>5.1.6 Maintain a community outreach programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attendance at other t-RFMOs meetings. ▪ Attendance at governing council meetings of FFA. ▪ Attendance at regional and international technical workshops and trainings. ▪ Collaborations with other RFMOs and other relevant international organisations and entities. ▪ Providing communal support in FSM.
<p>Summary of annual activities under Objective 5.1</p> <p>The Secretariat’s attendance at regional and international meetings in 2022 was limited due to the continued disruptions of the global COVID-19 pandemic on international travels. The Secretariat’s participation at some of the meetings was through virtual means.</p> <p>The Executive Director and senior managers participated in the online governing council meetings of the FFA both at the official and ministerial levels. The Executive Director and Compliance Manager attended the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting held in Suva, Fiji in July 2022. The Assistant Compliance Manager attended the FAO Port State Measures Regional Coordination Meeting in Nadi, in May 2022. The Executive Director was able to attend the 35th Committee on Fisheries (COFI) meeting in Rome, Italy from 5 to 9 September. One of the key outcomes of the COFI meeting was the agreement to establish a “sub-committee on fisheries management” that the Secretariat should follow its work closely in the future. At the margins of the Rome meeting, the Executive Director also had the opportunity to catch up with colleagues from other tuna-RFMOs in a side meeting that provided the opportunity to share current developments at IATTC, IOTC, ICCAT and WCPFC.</p> <p>The Secretariat also attended, virtually, these technical meetings of the FFA namely, the, the PNA Observer Coordinators Meetings and FFA/SPC Regional Observer Coordinators Workshop, and the FFA MCS Working Group. The Secretariat also participated, virtually, at the SPC organised meetings namely, the SPC Tuna Data Workshop (April), the Pre-assessment Workshop, and the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme related meetings. The Secretariat also attended virtually the FAO Technical Consultation on Voluntary</p>	

Guidelines for Transshipment in late May 2022. The Secretariat attended virtually the 22nd ISC Plenary Meeting which was physically held in Kona, Hawaii, in July 2022.

Collaborations continued with other tuna RFMO Secretariat compliance counterparts and the [International MCS Network](#) through the Tuna Compliance Network (TCN) which continues to be chaired by the Secretariat Compliance Manager Dr Lara Manarangi-Trott. Since 2020, similar informal collaboration with the support of the International MCS Network, has continued amongst Fisheries Secretariat Compliance counterparts with areas of responsibility in the Pan Pacific region (CCAMLR, CCSBT, IATTC, NPAFC, NPFC, SPRFMO and WCPFC). The Secretariat continued under the umbrella of the TCN and Pan Pacific Fisheries Compliance Network, informal collaboration with Officers responsible for compliance in Secretariats of RFMO and RFBs, to collaborate and share information about changes to each RFMOs respective IUU vessel lists. The initiative is intended to support relevant RFMOs with IUU Vessel List cross-listing procedures which require consideration of other RFMOs IUU vessel lists and changes therein, and due diligence checks of IUU vessel lists. In 2022, using in-kind support from the International MCS Network, the collaboration was extended to include a study that explores IT tool solutions that could improve the ability of RFMOs to receive near real-time information regarding updates, additions, and removals of vessels from IUU Vessel Lists of other RFMOs. The report from the study was recently completed and the recommendations and findings of the study, as well as options for financing, are under consideration by each RFMO Secretariat. Currently links are included on the WCPFC website to other IUU Vessel lists [<https://www.wcpfc.int/wcpfc-iuu-vessel-list>].

The Secretariat continued to support communal activities in 2022 including sponsorship of a fishing tournament, Pohnpei Swim Club, a national law society debate, Pohnpei Public Library, and Pohnpei public health COVID-19 outreach. The Secretariat also availed its Annex building for meetings locally organised by NORMA, Micronesia Red Cross, SPC, International Organization for Migration, US Embassy, Micronesian Conservation Trust and Pohnpei state Fisheries & Aquaculture Office.

Objective 5.2

Maintain a robust website and other electronic publications to disseminate widely the work of the WCPFC and Secretariat

Activities	Annual Outputs
5.2.1 Maintenance of a modern and accessible website for the Commission containing relevant and updated information on the work of the Commission 5.2.2 Publication of the Secretariat's quarterly electronic newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The www.wcpfc.int website regularly updated. ▪ Issued four editions of the e-newsletter in 2022.

Summary of annual activities under Objective 5.2

The Secretariat continued to maintain and regularly update its www.wcpfc.int website in 2022.

The Secretariat continued to publish and distribute its electronic newsletters with quarterly updates in 2022. The newsletter provides updates and news on the work of the Commission and the activities of the Secretariat. Its distribution list covers a broader

spectrum including subscribers beyond officials and representatives of CCMs and observers of the WCPFC.

3.3 *Financial and Administrative Matters*

61. The 2021 financial statements and accounts were submitted to the auditor as per the financial regulations but due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Pohnpei followed by the principal auditor needing to travel for medical attention, the audit report was delayed. The audited financial statements were circulated to Members on 12 October, together with the External Auditor's Report. The Auditor reported that the statements and accounts compiled were compliant with the required accounting standards as well as the Commission's Financial Regulations and presented a fair view of the financial position of the Commission. The Auditor's report will be presented for the collective review and final consideration of WCPFC19 in December 2022.

62. The staff establishment at the Secretariat remained stable at 24 staff comprising of 9 positions for professional staff including the Executive Director, and 15 positions for support staff. In addition to the staff, the office has an additional 13 contractors that work as cleaners, gardeners, and guards for the office. With COVID-19 disruptions, a number of staff worked remotely from abroad for part of the year due to continued travel difficulties. The borders to Pohnpei opened on 1 August with no need to quarantine. The staff working from abroad were required to return to Pohnpei by the month of October.

63. The Secretariat continued to use the QuickBooks Enterprise as the Commissions financial management system. Maintenance of the headquarters building services and grounds continued to be a challenge, however, by implementing a regular maintenance schedule of the buildings and grounds as supported by regular annual budgetary allocations ensured that those properties and assets continue to be in good order.

64. The Secretariat continues to implement its green policy as it continues to look for initiatives to reduce the impacts of its operations on the environment. The Secretariat maintained its existing solar panels. The saving for 2022 from the use of solar energy is estimated at around \$88,000.

Trust Funds

65. The Commission continued in 2022 to receive voluntary contributions from member states and multilateral organisations to support the work of the Commission. These are on top of the assessed contributions of member States that supported the core budget for 2022. The following voluntary contributions were gratefully received by the Commission from:

- a) **Australia** - \$72,260 to the Special Requirements Fund;
- b) **China** – \$22,500 to the Special Requirements Fund;
- c) **European Union** – a projected \$19,253 for the Record of Fishing Vessel FLUX compatibility and \$309,900 for close-kin-mark-recapture methods to resolve key stock assessment uncertainties;
- d) **Japan** - \$232,821 for the Japan Trust Fund to support capacity building projects in fisheries statistic, regulations and enforcement in small island developing states;
- e) **Korea** - \$150,880 for the Tuna Tagging Project; and

- f) **United States of America** - \$60,000 to support additional compliance review days in 2023, \$25,000 to support migration of the new Record of Fishing Vessels, and \$40,000 for training for WCPFC-IATTC cross endorsed observers.

Information Technology Systems

66. As in previous years, the Secretariat network maintained internal operations and support to member States at more than 99% systems availability. The information and communication technology systems at the Secretariat are serviced by two full time staff, one professional and one support staff. Additional support for hardware infrastructure, website development, systems analysis, and application development are sourced from four key external services providers.

67. The global pandemic induced travel disruptions continued to place additional demands on the Secretariat's ICT infrastructure with more demand on online transactions, remote work, and online meetings. The network firewalls, email gateway and remote desktop infrastructure were able to meet the additional demands required to support the levels of remote working (both in terms of staff working from locations outside of Pohnpei and during the different phases of the office COVID-19 protocols).

68. In addition to the hardware and network infrastructure, the ICT team have been actively supporting the Compliance and Science teams with various enhancements to the online application portfolio. The major application development in 2022 was the upgrade and enhancements to the Compliance Case File System (CCFS). In 2022 work commenced on necessary Information Systems upgrades for the Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV), Charter Notifications, WCPFC VMS VTAF management and MTU audits.

4. SERVICES PROVIDERS TO THE COMMISSION

69. When the Commission was established in 2004, the Convention that established it acknowledged that some of the functions expected of the Commission were already undertaken by then existing regional organizations and arrangements. So, the Commission was encouraged to take advantage of those exiting capacities and avoid replicating the same capacities. The Commission continued in 2022 to maintain contractual arrangements with other regional organisations for the provision of certain services on behalf of the Commission. These arrangements are explained in the succeeding paragraphs

4.1 *The Oceanic Fisheries Programme of the Pacific Community (SPC-OFP)*

70. The SPC-OFP as the designated Scientific Services Provider (SSP) for the Commission continued in 2022 to conduct data management, statistical analysis, stock assessments and related analytical services, management analyses and member performance monitoring, and other advisory and technical services as may be required by the Commission.

71. The SSP supported the SC18 meeting by producing around 60 papers and reports for the meeting, covering all four thematic areas and the Online Discussion Forum topics. It also prepared the meeting reports for the Pacific Tuna Tagging Project (PTTP) and the WCPFC Pacific Marine Specimen Bank and undertook ongoing development of the MULTIFAN-CL assessment software. The SSP was also available and did provide *ad hoc* advice and support throughout the year.

72. More specifically, the SSP assisted the following Commission related activities:
- a) attendance and supported SC18, TCC18, and the SMD01 including the 2 Harvest Strategy Capacity Building seminars;
 - b) facilitated the WCPO yellowfin assessment peer review process, including pre-meetings, workshop, and associated analysis and reporting;
 - c) assisted various WPEA Project activities including the data review online meeting, the annual catch estimates workshops, the Vietnam TUFMAN 2 training, and providing ongoing database system and data management support;
 - d) conducted the 2022 Western Pacific tagging cruise (WP6) implemented only within Solomon Islands waters with the primary objective to tag about 10,000 skipjack to provide data for the scheduled 2025 stock assessment for this species;
 - e) convened electronically the 16th PTTP Steering Committee meeting and one PTTP Cruise Planning Advisory Committee meeting;
 - f) continued the biological sampling programme to curate and facilitate access by researchers to samples contained in the Pacific Marine Specimen Bank and hosted the electronic 4th WCPFC Pacific Marine Specimen Bank Steering Committee meeting;
 - g) hosted the online 16th Tuna Data Workshop to assist compilation of CCM's tuna fishery data;
 - h) supported the Secretariat on CMS reporting issues and other related work for TCC18;
 - i) actioned various requests for access to WCPFC data, as approved by the WCPFC Executive Director;
 - j) supported the IWG to review CMM 2009-06 (Transshipment CMM), by assisting the Secretariat to progress work that analyses transshipment information to support the review of the Transshipment Measure (CMM 2009-06);
 - k) assisted the Secretariat with the preparations that support routine tables and data summaries used in the Annual Report on the Regional Observer Programme and continued to supply ROP data in accordance with agreed procedures which is used for updates of CCFS with new cases;
 - l) published additional tables and figures in the Observer Data Management paper for SC18 and TCC18 to indicate the spatial coverage of purse seine and longline ROP observer coverage over recent years, indicating how representative ROP observer data is within purse seine and longline fisheries, and the extent to which WCPFC has access to ROP observer data for monitoring the implementation of measures, including in the CCFS;
 - m) hosted the online Pre-assessment Workshop for 2022 skipjack, southwest Pacific blue shark and southwest Pacific shortfin mako shark stock assessments and provided the resulting assessments;
 - n) supported the 3rd South Pacific albacore roadmap intersessional working group meeting;
 - o) continued to enhance the WCPFC scientific public domain data products, including the recent addition of public domain size data;
 - p) continued to publish the tables on Annual Catch and Effort Estimates (the [ACE tables](#)); and
 - q) provided data summaries in support of the tropical tuna CMM, south Pacific albacore CMM and the draft South Pacific Swordfish CMM.

4.2 *The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)*

73. The Commission continued its association with the FFA through its service level agreement for VMS services. Since 30 June 2016, the service provider used by FFA has been TrackWell (www.trackwell.com). The Pacific VMS system continued to operate as two separate and distinct entities to protect the integrity of the Commission VMS data and the FFA VMS data. Currently there are almost 2,335 vessels reporting to the Commission VMS, and nearly 36% report through the FFA VMS system with position transfer to the WCPFC (the Commission separately maintains VMS contracts for airtime services for positions from the WCPFC-VMS direct reporting vessels). The Commission VMS system under the services level agreement provided continued ongoing support to routine VMS services, “flick the switch” implementation and members’ high seas MCS operations.

4.3 *The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC)*

74. The ISC is the designated scientific services provider for the Northern Committee. In that role, the ISC on request would provide scientific information and advice on concerned stocks to Northern Committee, Scientific Committee, and the Commission.

75. The Secretariat attended (virtually) the 22nd Plenary Meeting of the ISC (ISC22) which was held in-person in Kona, Hawaii, USA, from 12 to 18 July 2022 with option for virtual participation. Dr John Holmes (Canada) chaired the meeting. The Plenary was attended by Members from Canada, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico and the United States as well as the IATTC, and Observers.

76. The key outcomes of the ISC22 include:

- a) the stock assessment for Pacific Bluefin tuna;
- b) the stock assessment for the North Pacific blue shark stock;
- c) decision to defer a benchmark assessment for WCNPO striped marlin to ISC23 due to issue with the choice of growth curve;
- d) endorsement of the Billfish Working Group plan to conduct a WCNPO swordfish assessment which includes swordfish from the northern Eastern Pacific Ocean stock because of cooperative efforts to redefine swordfish stock boundaries in the Pacific Ocean; and
- e) endorsement of the proposal to focus on delivering the upcoming benchmark stock assessment for PBF in 2024 as a priority and the initial MSE results to managers and stakeholders in 2025.

5. CONCLUSION

77. The disruptions caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic continued to dictate the manner of transacting business for the Commission and the Secretariat in 2022, despite the lifting of restrictions on international travels and border closures by many countries around the world including travels in and out of Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia the seat of the WCPFC head office. However, there are positive indications of transitioning out of the COVID-19 environment, as the Commission welcomes its first physical annual meeting (WCPFC19) in Da Nang, Vietnam at the end of the year after three years of virtual meetings.

78. Despite the continued pandemic disruptions in 2022, the Commission and the Secretariat had a reasonably successful year. All the targeted business of the Commission leading up to the WCPFC19 were successfully undertaken through virtual means as documented in this report. The online meetings of SC18, TCC18 and NC18 were all successfully convened and supported and their outcomes to be tabled at WCPFC19 for the Commission to discuss and decide. The year also witnessed the convening on a trial basis of the first Science-Management Dialogue to progress discussion and development of management procedures for skipjack tuna and South Pacific albacore tuna. The report of the Dialogue will be presented to WCPFC19 and hopefully the dialogue outcomes would justify the continuation of the dialogue as a regular process of the WCPFC to expedite the development and implementation of harvest strategies into the management of WCPO tuna fisheries. There were also positive developments in progressing reforms to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the WCPFC compliance monitoring scheme through the work of the dedicated CMS working group and TCC18, with their reports also be tabled at WCPFC19. The Commission at WCPFC19 would also receive the outcomes of the stock status of various highly migratory fish stocks considered at SC18. In particular, the highly commercialized tuna stocks of bigeye, yellowfin, skipjack and South Pacific albacore of the WCPO were all assessed to be not in an overfished status nor subject to overfishing.

79. The Commission at WCPFC19 would have all the necessary information and advice it requires to consider and decide on the essential decisions the Commission needs to take to ensure the continuation of its core roles and functions in 2023 and onward years and to make sure there is no avoidable gap in the WCPFC conservation and management regime.

80. This report documents once again the resilience and adaptability of the Commission and its membership in response the new norm on transacting business.

81. The WCPFC19 is invited to discuss and note the report.