



**Development of a Revised Tropical Tuna Measure Workshop 4  
29 to 30 September 2023  
Pohnpei, FSM, and online**

---

**Information Paper on Elements of Allocation Frameworks in other tRFMOs**

---

**WCPFC-TTMW4-2023-IP03  
20 September 2023**

**Prepared by the Secretariat**

1. The purpose of this paper is to support the Commission's discussions on the development of an allocation framework by providing some general information on how other RFMOs have approached allocation. It is recognized that the WCPF Convention is unique from other tuna regional fisheries management organizations (tRFMOs),<sup>1</sup> including because of its membership, the status of its stocks and its status as the first RFMO to be based on the 1995 UN Fish Stock Agreement. However, as noted by the WCPFC Chair in Circular 2023/73, there is merit in considering the issues that other tRFMOs have encountered in considering and adopting allocation frameworks.
2. To facilitate the preparation of this paper, the Secretariat conducted a desk-top review of allocation frameworks at IATTC, ICCAT, IOTC and CCBST. The review and the information in this paper focus on the key elements that have been incorporated into other tRFMO allocation frameworks and highlights challenges that other RFMOs have encountered in developing allocation frameworks. This review is not intended to be comprehensive but seeks to identify some common elements that other tRFMOs have considered.

***Brief Review of tRFMOs' Approaches to Allocation***

3. In 1998 the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) adopted basic allocation criteria to apply to carrying capacity in the purse seine fishery.<sup>2</sup> These were elaborated on in 2002 in the context limiting purse-seine capacity in order to address overcapacity issues.<sup>3</sup> The IATTC work on allocation of capacity limits in the purse seine fishery is ongoing under its Permanent Working Group on Fleet Capacity (FC) established by IATTC Resolution 98-11. In 2017, there was a proposal for the Creation of a Working Group on Allocation of Fishing Opportunities for Tropical Tuna Species,<sup>4</sup> but this was not agreed.

---

<sup>1</sup> There are currently five international organizations for the conservation and management of tuna and tuna-like species: Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission – 1949 ([IATTC](#)), International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas – 1966 ([ICCAT](#)), Indian Ocean Tuna Commission – 1996 ([IOTC](#)), and the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna - 1994 ([CCSBT](#)); and WCPFC.

<sup>2</sup> IATTC, Resolution on Fleet Capacity [Resolution C-98-11](#).

<sup>3</sup> IATTC, Capacity of the tuna fleet operating in the EOP [Resolution C-02-03](#).

<sup>4</sup> Proposal [IATTC-92-C1](#).

4. The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) first determined and distributed a TAC in 1982 for bluefin tuna stocks, which was directly negotiated based upon historical catches, economic factors and monitoring needs.<sup>5</sup> Further TACs and allocations, largely based on historic catches, followed. Then, in 2001, ICCAT adopted a comprehensive set of allocation criteria.<sup>6</sup> However, no consensus has been reached within ICCAT on weighting and, as a result, the criteria have tended to be used in a qualitative way to inform allocation decisions by ICCAT Panels on a stock-by-stock basis.<sup>7</sup>
5. The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) has not formally adopted allocation criteria nor an allocation regime. In 2010, IOTC Resolution 10/01 required the Commission to adopt an allocation quota system or any other relevant measure for the yellowfin and bigeye tunas at its 2012 session and to hold technical meetings to progress allocation.<sup>8</sup> The first meeting of the IOTC Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria (TCAC) was held in 2011. The twelfth meeting of the TCAC is to be held in October 2023 and will have before it version 6 of the Chair's Draft Proposal for an Allocation Regime.<sup>9</sup>
6. The Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) originally inherited the catch limits that Australia, Japan and New Zealand had initiated from 1985 to conserve the stock. In 1994 the voluntary management arrangement between Australia, Japan and New Zealand was formalized with the establishment of CCSBT. From 2001 the Commission encouraged new members in the organization. From 2002 to 2011, CCSBT worked to develop a Management Procedure (MP) in order to guide its global TAC setting process for southern bluefin tuna. Under the MP the TAC is set in three year periods and allocated proportionately among members and cooperating non-members, and with the potential for amounts to be set aside for research mortality and for IUU catch by non-members.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Elements of Allocation Frameworks of other tRFMOs*

7. The attached matrix at the Annex identifies key elements that tRFMOs have considered in their allocation frameworks. These elements represent broad categories and are not intended to be a full elaboration of all the issues that tRFMOs have considered as part of an allocation framework. The final row - the status of the development of harvest strategies in the tRFMOs - is included in light of the link between allocation and harvest strategies as set out in information paper [WCPFC-TTMW4-2023-IP02](#).
8. While there is considerable variation in the precise approach adopted by tRFMOs, and some generalizations have to be made, the following are the main points of six key elements.
  - i. Criteria for allocation
9. Most tRFMOs have established basic criteria for allocation, or are in the process of doing so. In some cases (eg ICCAT, CCSBT) these are broad criteria with no differentiation in terms of

<sup>5</sup> [Seto, K et al](#), 'Resource allocation in transboundary tuna fisheries: a global analysis'. *Ambio* 50 (2020), p. 248.

<sup>6</sup> ICCAT Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities, [ICCAT 01-25](#). The text of the criteria was repeated in ICCAT [Resolution 15-13](#).

<sup>7</sup> Cox, A., *Quota Allocation in International Fisheries*, OECD Publishing (2009), p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> IOTC [Resolution 10/01](#) for the Conservation and Management of Tropical Tuna Stocks in the IOTC Area of Competence.

<sup>9</sup> Chair's Draft Proposal for an Allocation Regime (v.6), [IOTC-2023-TCAC12-02\[E\]](#).

<sup>10</sup> Resolution on the Allocation of the Global Total Allowable Catch, [2017](#).

importance. This may result in tRFMOs applying the criteria in qualitative ways from year to year (eg in ICCAT) and in allocation essentially being negotiated between the parties. There seems to be a trend towards tRFMOs establishing principles or conditions for the application of the criteria, such as that they be applied in a fair and equitable manner (ICCAT, IOTC).

ii. Needs of developing States

10. Most tRFMOs take into account the needs of developing and/or coastal States as one of the criteria for allocation (IATTC, ICCAT, CCSBT). In the case of ICCAT, allocation criteria relating to coastal developing States appear to be met by exempting those States from capacity limits.<sup>11</sup> The IOTC Chair's draft proposal for an allocation regime contains a specific formula for "coastal State allocation", although this text is bracketed.<sup>12</sup> In CCSBT, Indonesia has argued for an increase to its CCSBT allocation due to its situation as a developing country with direct access to southern bluefin tuna fishing grounds. This may be considered at the CCSBT meeting in October 2023.<sup>13</sup>

iii. Eligibility for allocation

11. In general, tRFMOs allocate quotas to participants in the tRFMO and to cooperating non-members. Some make allowance for new entrants and for those developing countries with aspirations to fish. For example, ICCAT has adopted allocations based on aspirations,<sup>14</sup> and IATTC has exempted new developing country entrants from fleet capacity limits in the past.<sup>15</sup> CCSBT encourages non-members to cooperate with CCSBT and also makes provision for fishing by non-members in its allocation regime.

iv. Scope

12. Allocation frameworks do not exclude from its scope any stocks covered by the tRFMO. However, priority is given to certain stocks (ICCAT, CCSBT) or, in the case of IATTC to fisheries (purse seine and longline). In some instances, allocation of catch or effort quotas is undertaken on an interim basis without prejudice to future work on allocation (ICCAT, IOTC).

v. Fisheries management tools

13. A variety of fisheries management tools are adopted by tRFMOs. In most cases allocation is of catch limits, catch quotas or fishing opportunities (ICCAT, IOTC, CCSBT, and IATTC with respect to longline catches of bigeye and bluefin). These are either in set values, or in proportionate shares, which are converted to values. In IATTC allocation is of effort in terms of capacity limits. In most

---

<sup>11</sup> [Seto, K et al, 'Resource allocation in transboundary tuna fisheries: a global analysis'. \*Ambio\* 50 \(2020\), p. 247.](#)

See for example ICCAT, [Recommendation 22-01](#): Recommendation on a Multi-Annual Conservation and Management Programme for Tropical Tunas (2022), para 5.

<sup>12</sup> Chair's Draft Proposal for an Allocation Regime (v.6), [IOTC-2023-TCAC12-02\[E\]](#).

<sup>13</sup> CCSBT, [Report](#) of the Extended Commission of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the Commission, 10-14 October 2022, paras 106-108.

<sup>14</sup> Cox, A., *Quota Allocation in International Fisheries*, OECD Publishing (2009), p. 16: "For example, in 2002, ICCAT made a 25t allocation of western Bluefin tuna to Mexico in recognition of its aspirations. Also in 2002, the rebuilding plan for northern swordfish included allocations not only to traditional parties but also to Morocco, Mexico, Barbados, Venezuela, Trinidad/Tobago, the UK, France, China and Chinese Taipei in recognition of their existing fisheries and aspirations. In the case of the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna stock, the multi-annual allocation exercise undertaken in 2002 included allocations for Libya and Morocco who had opted out of previous quota agreements on this stock due to dissatisfaction over initial allocation negotiations."

<sup>15</sup> IATTC Resolution on Fleet Capacity, [Resolution C-98-11](#).

tRFMOs, allocations are set annually, although CCSBT has quasi-automated allocations occurring triennially based on each country's nominal catch percentage of the TAC, with potential adjustments in extenuating circumstances.

vi. Allocation management tools

14. There are different approaches to the way in which allocation is managed, particularly as regards transferability, carrying forward of allocations, and addressing overcatch of quota.
15. For example, ICCAT does not permit the trading and selling of quotas.<sup>16</sup> However, temporary transfers and exchanges have been allowed on a case-by-case basis.<sup>17</sup> In IATTC a 'Transferable Day Credit Scheme' is under discussion in the Permanent Working Group on Fleet Capacity, but there was no consensus on the transferability mechanism at its 23rd meeting in July 2022.<sup>18</sup> CCSBT allows voluntary transfers of quota between members and any such transfers are specified in the table of allocations. IOTC is giving consideration to allowing transfers among parties (not cooperating non-parties) on an ad hoc basis only.
16. With respect to carrying forward of unused allocations, IOTC is giving consideration to permitting members to carry forward portions of allocations which are not caught due to extenuating circumstances.<sup>19</sup> CCSBT allows its participants to carry forward any unused TAC in the subsequent year, subject to limitations and conditions.<sup>20</sup> Both IOTC and CCSBT make provision for payback of overcatch.

*Observations and issues relating to Allocation frameworks at other tRFMOs*

17. The following challenges appear to have arisen in relation to allocation frameworks at other tRFMOs:
  - i. While basic criteria have generally been agreed, there are few examples of decisions to weight or prioritize certain criteria over others. Indeed in 2001 ICCAT considered "prioritizing or weighting" as a condition of allocation, it was agreed that weighting criteria would be too difficult, even on a stock-by-stock basis.<sup>21</sup>
  - ii. There does not appear currently to be a systematic approach among tRFMOs to addressing the needs of developing States.
  - iii. Where there are agreed criteria, allocation of quota or limits tends to be on a stock-by-stock or fisheries basis. Often allocations are made on an interim, or de facto basis as a way to implement management plans for rebuilding stocks over several years.

---

<sup>16</sup> ICCAT Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities, [Resolution 15-13](#).

<sup>17</sup> ICCAT, [Proceedings of the 17<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting](#) of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, 2001, paras 8.1-8.2.

<sup>18</sup> IATTC, [Report of the 23rd Permanent Working Group on Fleet Capacity](#) 27 July 2022.

<sup>19</sup> Chair's Draft Proposal for an Allocation Regime (v.6), [IOTC-2023-TCAC12-02\[E\]](#).

<sup>20</sup> CCSBT [Resolution](#) on Limited Carry-forward of Unfished Annual Total Available Catch of Southern Bluefin Tuna, 2019.

<sup>21</sup> ICCAT, [Proceedings of the 17<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting](#) of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, 2001, para 6.12.

- iv. Allocations to new entrants to the fishery may sometimes be at the expense of the health of the fish stocks.<sup>22</sup>
- v. Agreement on the transferability of catch or quota allocations has been hampered (eg in IATTC) by some complex questions, including those relating to the mechanism for transfers, the monitoring of transfers, and the potential for increased pressure on stocks.
- vi. While some provision may be made for addressing underage and overage of catch allocations, these are subject to specific limitations and conditions, which depend on the tRFMO and negotiation among the members.
- vii. Gaining agreement on an allocation regime takes considerable time and effort.

---

<sup>22</sup> Cox, A., *Quota Allocation in International Fisheries*, OECD Publishing (2009), p. 16.

### Key Elements of other tuna RFMO Allocation Framework

Elements	IATTC*	ICCAT†	IOTC	CCSBT
Criteria	Criteria best-defined in context of purse seine fishery [Resolutions 98-11 and 02-03 on Fleet Capacity]	Comprehensive set of criteria for allocation and rules for application of criteria by ICCAT panels adopted in 2001 [Resolution 15-13‡]	No criteria adopted, but under negotiation as a component in draft text for an allocation regime under Technical Committee on Allocation Criteria [TCAC Chair’s draft v.6, prepared for TCAC12 in Oct 2023]	CCSBT Convention Article 8 (1994) requires allocation and sets forth five basic criteria.
Needs of Developing States	Criteria refers to coastal States, not specifically developing States: Historical catch calculation should take into account catch in national zones [Resolution 98-11] Allocation plan should consider “coastal States and other States with a longstanding and significant interest...to develop and maintain their own tuna fishing industries” [Resolution 02-03]	Multiple allocation criteria concern interests or needs of developing and/or coastal States or communities [Resolution 15-13, #s 8-12 & 14]  In practice, developing States and minor harvesters exempted from allocation limits.  Convention confers ability to object and opt out of allocation limit.	Entire preamble section in draft text is bracketed but recognizes “aspirations, needs and special requirements of developing States...especially [LDCs] and [SIDS] that are coastal States in the IOTC area..” [draft Allocation Regime text v.6 (2023)] Draft text also contains a specific formula for “Coastal State Allocation”, also bracketed.	Article 8(4) criteria includes interests of coastal States but not specifically developing States.  In practice, Indonesia and South Africa have negotiated increases as coastal States on the bases of fleet expansion and adjustments to catch history, respectively.

\* IATTC resolutions are binding and are sometimes referred to as CMMs.

† ICCAT resolutions are generally non-binding, while recommendations are binding.

‡ ICCAT Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities were adopted in 2001 (ICCAT 01-25) and repeated in Resolution 15-13.

<b>Elements</b>	<b>IATTC*</b>	<b>ICCAT†</b>	<b>IOTC</b>	<b>CCSBT</b>
Eligibility	In purse seine fishery, per criteria: parties, applicants and those cooperating with CMMs [Resolution 02-03]	Party or entity or fishing entity or state with ability to apply CMMs [Resolution 15-13, #s 1 & 2]	Each CP and CNCP is eligible to receive an allocation (of one or more fish stocks), as are new entrants, if accepted into IOTC [TCAC Chair’s draft text v.6 (2023)]	Members and CNMs...”Each Cooperating Non-Member shall receive a fixed amount of the TAC, subject to the annual review of their status...The allocation of the TAC may be revised with the entry of new Members and Cooperating Non-Members [Resolution on Allocation of Global TAC (2017)]
Scope	Purse seine fishery (targeting primarily YFT, secondarily SKJ) Catch for BET in LL Catch for all gears for BFT	“All stocks when allocated by ICCAT” [Resolution 15-13, # 3]	All or most all stocks, but YFT, BET, SKJ, ALB and SWO first, as priorities [TCAC Chair’s draft text v.6 (2023)]	SBFT (the only species managed by CCSBT)
Management Tools (limits on capacity, effort, catch; closures)	Capacity in purse seine with closures; ongoing discussion of purse seine effort limits and allocation thereof under Fleet Capacity WG.  TAC and catch allocation for BET and BFT, as negotiated by parties.	Catch quotas	“Allocation means a fishing opportunity represented as a percentage share of TAC” [draft Allocation Regime text v.6 (2023)]	Catch limits with proportional shares for members

Elements	IATTC*	ICCAT†	IOTC	CCSBT
Allocation Management	Proposal for “Transferable Day Credit Scheme” for purse seine fishery under development in Fleet Capacity working group.	Temporary transfer or exchange of quotas permitted on case-by-case basis, but trading or selling quotas not allowed.	<p>Up to 20% carryforward of unharvested allocation, with Commission authorization.</p> <p>Penalty for 2 consecutive years of overcatch/payback plan option for developing States. Significant non-compliance may result in withdrawal or reduction of allocation.</p> <p>No permanent transfers. Transfers only among CPCs (CNCs not eligible), with notice to Executive Secretary [draft Allocation Regime text v.6 (2023)]</p>	<p>TAC is set in 3-year periods under MP.</p> <p>Provision for limited carry-forward of unfished quota [Resolution on Ltd Carry-Forward of Unfished TAC of SBFT, 2011, rev. 2014, rev. 2019]</p> <p>Quota transfers allowed, but quota trading may not occur without prior approval of Extended Commission.</p>
Status of Harvest Strategy Development	<u>Resolution C-22-04</u> : Harvest Strategy for N Atl ALB	<p><u>Rec 15-07</u>: Development of HCR and MSE</p> <p><u>Rec 21-04</u>: MP and exceptional circumstances for N Atl ALB</p> <p><u>Resolution 22-02</u>: Initial management objectives for W Atl SKJ</p> <p><u>Rec 22-09</u>: MP for BFT</p>	<p><u>Resolution 15/10</u>: TRP and LRP for TTs, ALB and SWO</p> <p><u>Resolution 16-02</u>: HCRs for SKJ</p> <p><u>Announcement</u>: recommended SKJ catch limit for 2021-2023</p> <p><u>Resolution 22/03</u>: MP for BET</p>	<p><u>Resolution Adoption Management Procedure</u> (2011 “Bali Procedure” &amp; rev. 2019 “Cape Town Procedure”)</p> <p><u>Resolution on Allocation of the Global TAC</u> (2011, rev. 2014, rev. 2017)</p> <p><u>Specifications of the CCSBT Management Procedure</u> (2020)</p>