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**Process to Develop an Allocation Framework Under CMM 2021-01**

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**WCPFC20-2023-17**  
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**Prepared by the Commission Chair**

## Purpose and Introduction

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide recommendations for the Commission to consider on a process and work plan to develop allocation frameworks for WCPFC fisheries and/or stocks.
2. Paragraphs 27 and 41 of [CMM 2021-01](#) - the Tropical Tuna Measure (TTM) - provide that the Commission is committed to transitioning to a more equitable allocation framework for fishing opportunities that takes into account Articles 8, 10 (3) and 30 of the Convention.
3. Paragraph 27 of CMM 2021-01 provides for the Commission to commence a process in 2022 to enable the Commission to reach agreement in 2023 on hard effort or catch limits in the high seas of the Convention Area and a framework for the allocation of those limits in the high seas amongst all Members and Participating Territories that adequately takes into account Articles 8, 10 (3) and 30 of the [Convention](#). Paragraph 41 provides the same timeframes in respect of hard limits for bigeye and a framework for allocating those limits.
4. The content of these paragraphs was first included in CMM 2017-01 where hard limits and an allocation framework for the high seas purse seine fishery was to be agreed by 2019 and hard limits for bigeye and a framework to allocate those limits was to be agreed by 2020. The time frames set out in the provisions were extended in CMM 2018-01, CMM 2020-01, and again in CMM 2021-01.
5. Although the Commission is committed to the development of hard limits and allocation frameworks, there has been little substantive progress to date. Attempts were made at WCPFC15 to develop draft terms of reference for a workshop on a framework for allocation of purse seine high seas effort or catch limits, but this was not agreed. At WCPFC19 the Commission agreed to a process and work plan to revise the TTM which included discussion and agreement on hard limits and an allocation framework. Consistent with the work plan, there was discussion on allocation criteria at the [TTMW3](#) workshop and proposals for high seas purse seine hard limits presented at the [TTMW4](#) workshop.

6. However, there is a need for more focused discussions to reach agreement on allocation frameworks. It is not expected that agreement will be reached quickly. Even if progress is made on hard limits for the high seas purse seine fishery at WCPFC20, there will still be a need to consider hard limits and an allocation framework for bigeye, as well as other WCPFC fisheries and/or stocks. The process, timeframe, and work plan for reaching agreement on allocation therefore needs to be discussed and agreed.

### Alternative possible processes

7. Past discussions on revisions to the TTM have taken place in special sessions or dedicated workshops. This process was used in 2017, 2021, and 2023. In 2017, two special sessions were held which led to the bridging measure, CMM 2017-01, which has been used as the basis for the TTM in the years since. In 2021, two virtual workshops were held and led by the Chair of the Commission to progress revisions to the TTM. The same approach was adopted in 2023, with one virtual workshop in June and one hybrid workshop in September.
8. There are also other potential options for making progress, such as the establishment of a WCPFC intersessional working group, or a technical working group. These have proved effective in making progress on technical issues in WCPFC. However, given the importance of allocation, it is not clear that an intersessional working group will be more effective than the workshop approach.
9. It may be recalled that some RFMOs, such as IOTC, have used an independent Chair to try to make progress on allocation. This is not an approach that WCPFC has used in the past. There may be doubts among some CCMs whether this would be more productive than other approaches.
10. This suggests that a similar approach to that used in the past for revisions to the TTM – the holding of workshops including virtually - be used for the development of allocation frameworks.

### Proposed process

11. Given the WCPFC experience to date and the relationship between allocation frameworks and the development and implementation of harvest strategies, which is ongoing, it can be expected that the development of allocation frameworks will be a multi-year process.
12. It is proposed that at least one virtual workshop be held in 2024 to begin the process of developing allocation frameworks in accordance with a proposed workplan. This workshop should aim to narrow down the criteria, consider options for allocation, and identify the data required to progress the discussions on allocation.
13. The workplan and the holding of future workshops would be decided at WCPFC21 in the light of progress made.

### Proposed workplan

14. The establishment of a process for the development of allocation frameworks also needs to consider what work needs to be undertaken to develop the frameworks.
15. Information paper [WCPFC-TTMW4-2023-IP01](#) set out the allocation criteria that have been raised by CCMs during past discussions. It is a comprehensive list but does not provide much guidance on how allocation might be agreed based on those criteria.

- a. First, there may be a need to narrow down the large number of proposed criteria into a few core criteria, together with any additional factors that should be taken into account.
  - b. Second, consideration may need to be given to weighting or giving priority to certain criteria, or the adjustment of criteria in extenuating circumstances.
  - c. Third, some of the allocation criteria may need additional scientific information or technical analysis so that the criteria may be effectively used in an allocation process. The information or analysis needs will need to be agreed and secured.
16. A second information paper [WCPFC-TTMW4-2023-IP03](#) provided some information on the kinds of elements that other tuna RFMOs have addressed when considering allocation frameworks. Issues that would seem to need to be addressed under an allocation framework, in addition to criteria for allocation, include:
  - a. How best to take into account the needs of developing and/or coastal States.
  - b. The eligibility for allocations, including the question of new entrants.
  - c. The scope of the application of allocation frameworks: e.g. different fisheries/stocks and their priority.
  - d. The metric for allocations: e.g. catch, effort, values or proportions.
  - e. The period of validity of allocations: e.g. annual, multi-year.
  - f. The use of allocations: e.g. transferability, chartering.
  - g. How to address over-catch and under-catch.
17. The development of allocation criteria and elements of an allocation framework should lead to the implementation of the allocation framework through agreement on the allocation of hard limits.
18. A proposed workplan is attached at Attachment 1. It proposes the objective of the workplan, which is to undertake preparatory work to implement the commitment of the Commission to transitioning to a more equitable allocation framework for fishing opportunities in the WCPO that takes into account Articles 8, 10 (3) and 30 of the Convention. It proposes that the workplan will be implemented in a multi-year process over the next 3 years, with at least one virtual workshop to be held each year to progress the workplan. The exact time frames for workshops will be made at the discretion of the Chair of the Commission in consultation with CCMs and taking into account other RFMO meetings attended by CCMs. The process will be led by the Chair of the Commission, with the assistance of the Vice Chair of the Commission. The Secretariat and the Scientific Services Provider will assist the Chair, Vice Chair and CCMs throughout the process.
19. The proposed workplan also sets out the work to be undertaken to address allocation criteria and the elements of an allocation framework, based on proposals of CCMs, in a three-year timeframe. It is proposed that the workplan be reviewed by the Commission on an annual basis to account for progress made.

## Recommendation

20. The Commission is invited to agree on a multi-year process and workplan (Attachment A) to progress allocation frameworks in accordance with the following timeframes, which will be reviewed annually by the Commission to account for progress made:

### **Year 1**

- i. Narrow down proposed allocation criteria to identify core criteria, supplemented by additional criteria that CCMs consider essential.
- ii. Identify data needs to assist in operationalising the agreed criteria.
- iii. Discuss how the criteria for allocation will be used in an allocation framework.
- iv. Consider elements of an allocation framework including the needs of developing and/or coastal States, eligibility for allocations, the priority to be given to different fisheries/stocks, the metric for allocations, and the use of allocations.

### **Year 2**

- i. Consider the data identified to assist in operationalising the agreed criteria.
- ii. Agree on how the criteria for allocation will be used in an allocation framework.
- iii. Agree on elements of an allocation framework including the needs of developing and/or coastal States, eligibility for allocations, the priority to be given to different fisheries/stocks, the metric for allocations, and the use of allocations.

### **Year 3**

- Implement the allocation framework through agreement on the allocation of hard limits and their incorporation in conservation and management measures.

## Workplan for the Development of Allocation Frameworks for Fishing Opportunities in the WCPO

1. The objective of the work plan is to undertake preparatory work for the purposes of implementing the commitment of the Commission to transitioning to a more equitable allocation framework for fishing opportunities in the WCPO that takes into account Articles 8, 10 (3) and 30 of the Convention.
2. The process will be led by the Chair of the Commission, with the assistance of the Vice Chair of the Commission. The Secretariat and the Scientific Services Provider will assist the Chair, Vice Chair and CCMs throughout the process.
3. The workplan will be implemented in a multi-year process over the next 3 years. At least one virtual workshop will be held each year to progress the workplan.
4. The exact timing of workshops will be made at the discretion of the Chair of the Commission in consultation with CCMs and taking into account other RFMO meetings attended by CCMs.
5. The workplan will include the following, based on proposals of CCMs:

	<b>Proposed Scope of Work</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Narrow down proposed allocation criteria to identify core criteria, supplemented by additional criteria that CCMs consider essential.</li> <li>ii. Identify data needs to assist in operationalising the agreed criteria.</li> <li>iii. Discuss how the criteria for allocation will be used in an allocation framework.</li> <li>iv. Consider elements of an allocation framework including the needs of developing and/or coastal States, eligibility for allocations, the priority to be given to different fisheries/stocks, the metric for allocations, and the use of allocations.</li> </ul>
<b>Year 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iv. Consider the data identified to assist in operationalising the agreed criteria.</li> <li>v. Agree on how the criteria for allocation will be used in an allocation framework.</li> <li>vi. Agree on elements of an allocation framework including the needs of developing and/or coastal States, eligibility for allocations, the priority to be given to different fisheries/stocks, the metric for allocations, and the use of allocations.</li> </ul>
<b>Year 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the allocation framework through agreement on the allocation of hard limits and their incorporation in conservation and management measures.</li> </ul>

6. The workplan will be reviewed by the Commission on an annual basis and revised as necessary to account for progress made.