



**COMMISSION**

**Second Science-Management Dialogue (SMD02)**

10:00 a.m. – 15:00 p.m., Pohnpei Time, 10-12 September 2024 (Online)

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**PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA**

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**WCPFC-SMD02-2024-02 (Rev.02<sup>1</sup>)**

**5 September 2024**

**AGENDA ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING**

- 1.1 Welcome address**
- 1.2 Meeting arrangements**
- 1.3 Adoption of agenda**

**AGENDA ITEM 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE SMD02**

The objectives of the SMD01 were to achieve a consistent understanding among members of the harvest strategy approach ([WCPFC-SMD01-2022/BP-01](#)). Likewise, the purpose of the SMD02 could be considered as a continuation of these efforts, possibly focusing on further refining the harvest strategies based on the outcomes and feedback from the WCPFC20 and SC20. It might involve evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies implemented, discussing new scientific data, and making necessary adjustments to the management procedures.

Therefore, the purpose of the SMD02 is multifaceted and crucial to advance harvest strategies within the WCPFC:

- a. Consistent Understanding among all members of harvest strategy's structure, function, and how it is to be implemented;
- b. Beginning discussions to prioritize and identify a subset of candidate management procedures, and determining additional work required for further analysis; and
- c. Discussing both short-term and long-term processes that will aid the Commission's decision-making regarding management procedures and developing a detailed implementation plan and schedule to guide these processes.

SMD02 notes that WCPFC20 has outlined a focused agenda for the SMD02 in 2024 (Para 263, WCPFC20 Summary Report). The key areas of focus will be:

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<sup>1</sup> Updated with Background Paper references and links to additional reference documents.

- a. South Pacific albacore management procedures, including a review of the ITRP
- b. Development of TRPs for bigeye and yellowfin tuna
- c. Application of the skipjack management procedure
- d. Capacity building for CCMs, facilitated by the SSP, which will be included throughout the whole SMD-02.

Additional reference documents that may be useful for this agenda item include:

1. [Updated workplan for the adoption of Harvest strategies under CMM 2022-03 \(formerly CMM 2014-06\)](#)
2. [Harvest Strategy Development for SP Albacore, Skipjack, Bigeye, and Yellowfin Tunas \(WCPFC20-2023-14 Rev1\)](#)
3. [Information and Data Requirements to Support Management Decisions for SP Albacore, Skipjack, Bigeye, and Yellowfin Tunas \(WCPFC20-2023-18\)](#)

### **AGENDA ITEM 3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

#### **3.1 WCPFC approach to Harvest Strategies**

The SSP will provide an introductory presentation on the general concepts and progress in the development of WCPFC Harvest Strategies to guide the decision-making in fisheries management to ensure the long-term sustainability of fish stocks. The general overview of the WCPFC's approach to harvest strategies includes developing management objectives, identifying reference points and harvest control rules, monitoring and assessment, stakeholder engagement, adaptive management, precautionary approach, capacity building among CCMs, and collaboration with other RFMOs.

#### **3.2 Outputs from the SC20 Management Issues Theme Session**

The Management Issues Theme Convener for SC20 will provide the key outputs from the discussions on harvest strategies. This will likely include a summary of the deliberations, any consensus reached on management approaches, and recommendations for future actions to be considered by the Commission at WCPFC21.

### **AGENDA ITEM 4. SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE**

Reference documents that may be useful for this agenda item include:

1. [Trends in the South Pacific albacore longline and troll fisheries \(SC20-SA-IP-07\)](#)
2. [Review of CMM 2015-02: South Pacific Albacore and Summary of Reporting to WCPFC \(WCPFC-TCC20-2024-IP06\)](#)

#### 4.1 Cooperation with IATTC

SMD02 will consider cooperation areas in managing the South Pacific albacore stock and fisheries Pacific-wide, noting the WCPFC20 decision:

*268. Noting the importance of the application of compatible measures between WCPFC and IATTC to enhance the effectiveness of collective conservation and management efforts, the Commission agreed to invite representatives from the IATTC Secretariat and CPCs<sup>2</sup> as appropriate, to participate as observers in SMD-02.*

#### 4.2 Review of iTRP

SC19 recommended that WCPFC20 review a list of candidate Target Reference Points (TRPs) as outlined in the document [SC19-MI-WP-03](#) (*Update to further inform discussions on South Pacific albacore objectives and the TRP*). The recommendation was to consider adopting a TRP for South Pacific albacore that is based on a set of reference years rather than a specific level based on biomass depletion percentage.

Subsequently, at WCPFC20, after discussions in a small working group, the Commission agreed on an iTRP for South Pacific albacore. This iTRP was specified as  $0.96 SB_{2017-2019}/SB_{F=0}$ <sup>3</sup>, to maintain the South Pacific albacore stock around this level on average when implementing a management procedure. It was also noted that this iTRP would be subject to review following the 2024 stock assessment and the further development of candidate management procedures.

Furthermore, WCPFC20 tasked the SSP to undertake evaluation of a range of alternative candidate South Pacific albacore target reference points between  $SB/SB_{F=0} = 0.42 - 0.56$  (long-term average  $SB/SB_{F=0}$  (WCPF-CA), or preferably equivalent levels defined in terms of a reference period) that will be considered in the context of the review of the adopted iTRP.

The SSP presented the preliminary results of WCPFC20 requests at the SC20 (SC20-MI-WP-03) and advised SC20 to review the recalibrated iTRP depletion value and its implications for fishing levels, alternative depletion levels, and management actions while requesting guidance on the methodology for longline catch-based projections.

SC20 recommended that both catch numbers and catch weight be evaluated as the basis for projections to support the review of the interim TRP for South Pacific albacore, and advised the SSP to present outcomes for vulnerable biomass for key fleets, and, for WCPFC21, to perform

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<sup>2</sup> IATTC Parties, co-operating non-parties, co-operating fishing entities or regional economic integration organizations

<sup>3</sup> Technical definitions:

“Spawning potential depletion” refers to the estimated South Pacific albacore spawning potential as a percentage of the estimated spawning potential in the absence of fishing (i.e., the unfished spawning potential). The metric is dynamic and is estimated for each model time step.

The method to be used in calculating spawning potential in the absence of fishing ( $SB_{F=0}$ ) shall be:

- a.  $SB_{F=0, t1-t2}$  is the average of the estimated spawning potential in the absence of fishing for a time window of ten years based on the most recent South Pacific albacore stock assessment, where  $t1=y-10$  to  $t2=y-1$  where  $y$  is the year under consideration; and
- b. The estimation shall be based on the relevant estimates of recruitment that have been adjusted to reflect conditions without fishing according to the stock recruitment relationship.

analyses that related to catch levels at 2017-2019 levels.

SMD-02 will further review the progress made since SC20 and provide recommendations to the Commission for the adoption of interim TRP for South Pacific albacore.

<b>SMD02-BP-01</b>	Graham Pilling, Rob Scott, Paul Hamer, Finlay Scott, and Nan Yao. <b>Recalibration of the Adopted South Pacific Albacore Interim Target Reference Point and Review of WCPFC20 Requested Options</b>
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### **4.3 South Pacific albacore management procedures**

The Commission at WCPFC20 tasked the SSP to undertake evaluations of some selected candidate Management Procedures for South Pacific albacore, where the output of the HCR is total allowable effort and alternatively where the output of the same or similar HCR is total allowable catch.

Due to unresolved technical challenges, the management procedure work was not available to SC20. However, SC20 reviewed and adopted the operating model reference set and robustness set for evaluating South Pacific albacore management procedures while recommending future work to address uncertainties, including the impacts of climate change, effort creep, and stock structure. They also provided technical guidance on the estimation model and the design of management procedure to be evaluated.

SMD02 will review the progress made since SC20 and provide recommendations to the Commission focusing on selecting an appropriate candidate MP or a suite of candidate MPs.

<b>SMD02-BP-02</b>	<b>xxx. Evaluation of candidate management procedures for South Pacific albacore</b>
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#### **4.3.1 Interrogation of performance indicators and identification of preferred outcomes**

Performance indicators inform the process of identifying a single MP or a subset of candidate MPs with desirable outcomes. These indicators are crucial as they quantitatively measure how well each MP meets the management objectives. The SMD02 will utilize these indicators, along with online tools, such as [SPAMPLE](#), to guide the selection process.

Updated information on the performance indicators for candidate MPs will be available to SMD02, but refer to [SC19-MI-WP-06](#) (*Evaluation of candidate management procedures for South Pacific albacore*) for the conceptual background.

#### **4.3.2 Settings and Assumptions of the MPs**

The SMD02 will engage in discussions to review the outcomes of MP-related discussions and recommendations from previous meetings and amend, as needed, the settings and assumptions of the MPs. This could involve:

- Defining fisheries and fishery controls within the harvest strategy to ensure they align with the management objectives.

- Considering a 3-year management cycle for the MPs, which could provide a balance between responsiveness to stock status changes and stability for fishery operations.
- Discussing alternative settings for MPs, which may include different harvest control rules.

**4.3.3 Additional work to be conducted by the SSP to support decision-making on MPs**

The SSP will conduct additional work to support these decision-making processes on MPs. This work is essential to refine the MPs and ensure they are robust and effective for the management of South Pacific albacore.

SMD02 will discuss any further work to be conducted by the SSP to finalize the development and adoption of the South Pacific albacore MP at WCPFC21.

**AGENDA ITEM 5. DEVELOPMENT OF BIGEYE AND YELLOWFIN TRPs**

According to the Indicative Work Plan for the Adoption of Harvest Strategies under CMM 2022-03 (Attachment 4, [WCPFC20 Summary Report](#)), the Commission is anticipated to agree on TRPs for bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna in 2024.

The SSP presented [SC20-MI-WP-07](#) (Analyses to Inform Discussions on Candidate Bigeye and Yellowfin Target Reference Points) at SC20, which updates the analyses previously presented to WCPFC18 using the latest assessments for these stocks. SC20 noted that based upon these analyses, current objectives for these species cannot be simultaneously met.

SC20 recommended updating SC20-MI-WP-07 for the Commission by including the depletion levels for South Pacific albacore resulting under each candidate TRP level, and assessing the impact on vulnerable biomass for bigeye and yellowfin tuna in tropical and southern longline fisheries. Additionally, SC20 advised re-evaluating bigeye and yellowfin tuna TRPs incorporating recent fishing levels from Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam.

SMD02 will offer advice to the Commission for the adoption of these TRPs for bigeye and yellowfin tuna.

<b>SMD02-BP-04</b>	<b>G. Pilling, R. Scott, P. Hamer, and F. Scott. Analyses to Inform Discussions on Candidate Bigeye and Yellowfin Target Reference Points</b>
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Additional reference documents that may be useful for this agenda item include:

1. [Summary of the reports received under tropical tuna CMMs from 2020-2024 \(WCPFC-TCC20-2024-IP07\)](#)
2. [Catch and effort data summaries to support discussions on Tropical Tuna CMMs \(SC20-MI-IP-05\)](#)

**AGENDA ITEM 6. APPLICATION OF THE SKIPJACK TUNA MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE – MONITORING STRATEGY**

WCPFC19 adopted a management procedure for WCPO skipjack tuna (CMM 2022-01), and WCPFC20 noted the successful running of the skipjack Management Procedure. WCPFC20 noted that a re-evaluation of the skipjack estimation method within the MP needs to be undertaken prior to the next implementation of the Management Procedure in 2026.

WCPFC20 also reviewed a draft monitoring strategy for skipjack tuna and agreed that:

*313. The Commission noted that it was not yet in a position to adopt a monitoring strategy for skipjack tuna at this time but there was a need for intersessional work, led by the SC and TCC Chairs, to facilitate the development by SSP of a monitoring strategy for adoption at WCPFC21, using the information in Attachment B of [WCPFC20-2023-14](#) as a reference.*

The SSP presented [SC20-MI-WP-02](#) (*WCPFC Skipjack Tuna Monitoring Strategy Report*), which updates the skipjack MP monitoring strategy to reflect recent Commission discussions and highlights key issues for SC20 to review.

In response, SC20 requested the SSP to analyze the impact of FAD closure duration changes and the representativeness of CPUEs on the interim skipjack MP, recommended reviewing the monitoring strategy in non-assessment years, and proposed two updates to the monitoring strategy Table 1 for further consideration by SMD, TCC, and the Commission.

Noting the observations within the monitoring strategy on the decline in pole-and-line fishing effort and implications for the estimation method within the skipjack interim management procedure, SC20 recommended that the SSP evaluate potential modifications to the estimation method for the WCPO skipjack interim MP, considering changes to CPUE indices and alternative assessment approaches, and report the findings to SC21 for further review and recommendations before the next implementation of the MP.

SMD02 will review the outcomes of MP discussions and the monitoring strategy from SC20 and provide recommendations to the Commission for adoption at WCPFC21.

<b>SMD02-BP-05</b> (SC20-MI-WP-01)	R. Scott, G. Pilling, F. Scott, P. Hamer, and N. Yao. <b>Re-evaluation of the Skipjack Management Procedure Estimation Method – Planned Approach</b>
<b>SMD02-BP-06</b> (SC20-MI-WP-02 Update)	R. Scott, F. Scott, N. Yao, P. Hamer, and G.M. Pilling. <b>WCPFC Skipjack Tuna Monitoring Strategy Report</b>

**AGENDA ITEM 7. CLIMATE CHANGE**

As requested by the Commission, the Co-leads from the United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands have drafted a Climate Change Work Plan that is currently under review by WCPFC subsidiary bodies. The draft work plan suggests that climate change could be considered in developing management procedures for skipjack and South Pacific albacore and discussed at the SMD. The draft work plan also proposed convening a 2025 SMD focused on climate change, including discussions on incorporating climate in developing harvest strategies.

The SMD02 may discuss incorporating climate considerations into the development of harvest strategies and any further refinements to the work plan.

<b>SMD02-BP-07</b> (SC20-EB-WP-02)	K. Kryc and B. Muller (Climate Co-Leads). <b>Commission’s Climate Change Work Plan and TOR for the Assessment of CMMs Susceptible to Climate Change Impacts</b>
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**AGENDA ITEM 8. OTHER MATTERS**

**8.1 New report template for WCPFC Stock Assessment Reports**

SC20 endorsed the adoption of a new reporting template for WCPFC Stock Assessment Reports. The SC Chair will provide an overview of a standardized approach to reporting stock status and management advice, recommending it as a guideline. SC20 also supported the recommendations in SC20-SA-WP10 for enhancing consistency in reporting, especially in communicating uncertainty, and agreed to use the proposed template as a guideline for SC21, while recommending that SMD02 and the Commission review and provide feedback if necessary.

<b>SMD02-BP-08</b>	Secretariat. <b>Reporting Template for Stock Status and Management Advice to the Commission</b>
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**AGENDA ITEM 9. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

**9.1 Next SMD meeting**

SMD02 will consider objectives and timing for SMD03.

**AGENDA ITEM 10. REVIEW OF SMD02 AGREED POINTS AND OUTCOMES**

**AGENDA ITEM 11. CLOSE OF MEETING**