



FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
Eighteenth Session
28 November to 3 December 2024
Suva, Fiji (Hybrid)

**Summary report of The Eighteenth Session of the Finance and Administration Committee
(FAC18)**

WCPFC21-2024-FAC18
3 December 2024

Introduction

1. The Eighteenth Session of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC18) was convened by the FAC Co-Chairs, David Power (AU) and Putuh Suadela (ID), on Sunday, 27 November 2024. Subsequent sessions of FAC18 were held on 30 November and 2 December 2024.
2. Representatives from American Samoa, Australia, Canada, China, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Cook Islands, European Union, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, Indonesia, Japan, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Chinese Taipei, Tuvalu, Tokelau, United States of America, Vanuatu, Panama, Pacific Community (SPC), Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS), Marine Stewardship Council, and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) were in attendance. Meeting support was provided by the Secretariat.
3. FAC18 agreed by consensus to present to the Commission the recommendations set out below.

AGENDA ITEM 1. OPENING OF MEETING

4. FAC Co-Chair, David Power (AU), called the Eighteenth Finance and Administration Committee to order at 10:25 AM on 27 November 2024.
5. FAC Co-Chair welcomed all participants and thanked Fiji for hosting and the excellent support provided. The FAC Co-Chair explained that the meeting report will follow a similar format as recent years. Rapporteurs will record interventions from Members, Cooperating Non-Members, and Participating Territories (CCMs) and Observers, but the report will not attribute interventions to a particular CCM unless requested.

1.1 Adoption of agenda

6. The agenda for FAC18, as outlined in FAC18-2024-01, was adopted without revision.

1.2 Meeting Arrangements

7. The Secretariat Finance and Administration Manager, Aaron Nighswander, gave an overview of the meeting arrangements and housekeeping.

AGENDA ITEM 2. AUDIT

2.1 Auditor Report for 2023 and General Account Financial Statements for 2023

8. The Secretariat presented an overview of FAC18-2024-05. In accordance with Financial Regulation 13.1, FAC18 reviewed the audited annual financial statements for 2023 and the related audit reports.
9. The audit report and compliance report provided that:
 - a. "In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Commission as of December 31, 2023, and the results of its operations and cash flows for the year..."and
 - b. a statement that there was compliance with the Commission's Financial Regulation 12.4 (c) which requires an opinion on compliance in relation to income, expenditure, the investment of money and the acquisition and disposal of assets.
10. The qualification from last year's audit was resolved and no additional qualifications were identified in the audit of the 2023 Financial Statements.
11. For the General Account Fund, the financial statements showed that there was an excess of income over expenditure of USD141,140. In addition, prior years' contributions of USD154,564 were paid by some Members in 2023. In accordance with Financial Regulation 4.4, the balance was transferred to the Working Capital Fund.
12. There was an error on page 7 of FAC18-2024-05 in the Statement of Appropriations and Expenditures, where the year should be 2023 instead of 2022. The Secretariat acknowledged this and agreed to make the necessary amendment.
13. One CCM pointed out that there were transfers of more than 10 per cent of appropriations between sub-items on the Auditor's report and asked the Secretariat the rationale of the transfers since the WCPFC Financial regulations allows the Executive Director to transfer up to 10 per cent of appropriations between sub-items. The Secretariat clarified that transfers over 10% can occur within Part 1 or Part 2 of the budget, which was the specific situation being referenced, and the cap only applies for transfers between part 1 and part 2 of the budget.
14. The Secretariat clarified that, with the Chairs approval, transfers over 10% can be made between subitems in the budget.

<p>1. FAC18 recommended that the Commission accept the audited financial statements for 2023 as set out in FAC18-2024-05.</p>
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2.2 Appointment of Auditor

15. The Secretariat provided an overview of FAC18-2024-10. The Commission's Financial Regulation 12 sets out the requirements for the appointment of an external auditor for a period of two years. The current two-year appointment of the external auditor, Ernst & Young, ended after the audit of the 2023 accounts was completed in 2024.
16. A tender for auditing services was circulated to Members on 19 September 2024 and posted on the Commission's website. The Secretariat received one quote from Ernst & Young to undertake this work. The proposed cost of the audit was USD17,510 plus tax for the audit of the 2024 financial statements, and USD18,540 plus tax for the audit of the 2025 financial statements. The initial amount in the indicative budget for 2025 for the financial audit was USD15,000 and therefore an amendment to a revised budget would be required.
17. One CCM questioned why there was a notable increase in the auditor's quote from previous years. The Secretariat noted the increase and said that the amount for the audit had been the same for over a decade. The Secretariat could not elaborate on why there was an increase from the bidder to the tender, and noted it was the only tender received.
18. FAC18 considered the tender for the appointment of an external auditor to conduct the audit of the Commission's financial statements and accounts for the years 2024 and 2025, and supported the proposed auditors, Ernst & Young, and the budget adjustments required.

2. FAC18 recommended that WCPFC21 appoint Ernst & Young as the external auditor to audit the 2024 and 2025 financial statements and accounts of the Commission.

AGENDA ITEM 3. STATUS OF THE COMMISSION'S FUNDS

3.1 Report on General Account Fund for 2024 - Contributions and Other Incomes

19. The Secretariat presented an overview of FAC18-2024-04. The Secretariat, as required by Financial Regulation 5.7, provided details of the 2024 activities including the collection of annual assessed contributions, voluntary contributions received, any investment income, other miscellaneous incomes received, and any advances from the Working Capital Fund.
20. The assessed contributions for 2024 were USD8,338,587 and as of 17 October 2024, fourteen members had outstanding 2024 contributions. The total outstanding balance from those members was USD2,880,837 with two of those outstanding amounts under USD100.
21. Members who have not paid their annual contributions to date were reminded to pay contributions so that the Commission's operations are not negatively impacted. Failure to pay contributions may result in the Secretariat not being able to operate by the end of January 2025 if payments are not received soon.
22. The Secretariat noted that, as of 25 November 2024, payments had been received from Papua New Guinea and Tuvalu for their outstanding contributions. The total amount due was USD2,500,805. In later meetings of the FAC the report was updated to reflect that Vanuatu had also made a payment and the outstanding balance as of 3 December 2024 was USD2,238,962.

23. Some CCMs with outstanding contributions indicated that they are in the process of making their payments, with the expectation of completing them by the end of 2024 or early 2025.

3. FAC18 noted the status of the report in FAC18-2024-10 on the status of General Account Fund for 2024.

3.2 Report on the Status of Other Funds for 2024

24. The Commission's Financial Regulations 6.2 and 7.7 require a report to each Regular Session of WCPFC on the Special Requirements Fund (SRF) as well as any funds established by the Executive Director. The Secretariat presented an overview of FAC18-2024-07, providing information on the incomes and expenditures of Funds other than the General Account Fund.

25. The Secretariat noted that:

- Special Requirements Fund (SRF): Has a balance of USD 15,746.
- Chinese Taipei Trust Fund (CTTF): Negotiations are underway for a second round of funding.
- CNM Contributions Fund: Has a balance of USD 205,137.
- Japanese Trust Fund: Has a balance of USD35,467, with USD168,474 used on projects.
- Voluntary Contributions Fund: Contributions received from Canada, the EU, Korea, Chinese Taipei, the USA, and ISSF.
- West Pacific East Asia Project Fund: Received a donation of USD 2,809,134 from New Zealand.
- Working Capital Fund: Currently has a balance of USD 1,334,504.

26. Nauru (on behalf of FFA) thanked Japan and Chinese Taipei for their support through the Trust Funds. Requested that the call for proposals be made by the first quarter of the year to allow sufficient time for implementation in the latter half of the year.

27. Tonga expressed thanks to Japan for the JTF, highlighting how it has been crucial in building their capacity and addressing their challenges.

4. FAC18 noted the report in FAC18-2024-07.

AGENDA ITEM 4. HEADQUARTERS ISSUES

4.1 Headquarters Matters

28. The Secretariat presented an overview of FAC18-2024-08, outlining updates on the current operations at the Commission Headquarters (Secretariat) in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia. The updates included information on Secretariat property, staff housing, security, telecommunications, travel, environmental sustainability, medical care, and utility services.

29. FAC18 noted the updates and requested that any plans for upgrades to the Commission building be shared with the WCPFC members.

5. FAC18 noted the report in FAC18-2024-08.

4.2 Proposed Revisions to the Staff Regulations

30. The Secretariat presented FAC18-2024-11 on the proposed revisions to the Staff Regulations. At FAC17 the Secretariat was tasked with “to review the Staff Regulations and report back to FAC18 with draft recommended changes to those regulations.
31. The recommended changes to the Staff Regulations introduced several key updates focused on inclusivity, employee protections, and benefits. Gender-neutral language is used throughout the document, and new policies address sexual harassment, whistleblower protection, and anti-intimidation, ensuring a safer and more supportive workplace.
32. Further additional changes recommended by the Secretariat were to clarify regulations around allowances and insurance, tighten the regulation around the carryover of annual leave, and update the approach for the local staff bonuses.
33. There was general support for:
 - amendments to modernize staff regulations by using gender-neutral terms,
 - clarifying that the Chair of the Commission must approve outside activities of the Executive Director (Regulation 8)
 - appropriate compensation for interim Executive Directors (Regulation 11)
 - amendments to travel-related expenses and allowances (Regulation 16)
 - ensuring the same approach to dispute resolution across different staff contracts (Regulation 15)
 - transport assistance for support staff (Regulation 18)
 - amendments to school holiday travel, examination leave, sick leave, suspension, bankruptcy and life insurance provisions (Regulation 23, 26, 30 and 32)
 - new provisions on sexual harassment, whistleblower protection, and anti-intimidation (new Regulation 37,38, and 39).
34. Whilst there was support for the proposed changes to the performance bonus for local staff, increasing it from 5% to 8%, there was a suggestion to change "bonus" to "reward." There was also a suggestion for changes under regulation 27 to change terminology to 'parental leave' instead of 'paternity leave' and 'maternity leave.'
35. There was recognition the importance of ensuring that staff can take leave without accumulating large amounts of unused leave, and that adequate provisions are in place for covering staff during their absence. However, some CCMs expressed concerns about the proposed changes to regulation 25 that would allow more than 50 days of annual leave to be carried over to the next year. There was a suggestion that if staff already have 50 days annual leave, a carryover of half (i.e., 25 days) might be more reasonable. Concerns were also raised about the budgetary impact if this proposal was approved.
36. The proposed revisions for Regulation 12 to include prior salary level as a factor in determining salary was not supported as this was thought to be inequitable.

37. On 2 December the Secretariat provided revised options for outstanding standing issues. There was general support for:

- updated language on interim Executive Director compensation (Regulation 11)
- an amendment to change language from "bonus" to "one-off performance payments" (Regulation 20(g))

38. There was no consensus on annual leave provisions (Regulation 25c). The Secretariat's proposed to continue to reduce existing leave balances and consider further options to bring to FAC19.

39. FAC18 noted the report in FAC18-2024-09 and supported the following changes to the staff regulations

- amendments to modernize staff regulations by using gender-neutral terms,
- clarifying that the Chair of the Commission must approve outside activities of the Executive Director (Regulation 8)
- appropriate compensation for interim Executive Directors (Regulation 11)
- amendments to travel-related expenses and allowances (Regulation 16)
- ensuring the same approach to dispute resolution across different staff contracts (Regulation 15)
- transport assistance for support staff (Regulation 18)
- amendments to school holiday travel, examination leave, sick leave, suspension, bankruptcy and life insurance provisions (Regulation 23, 26, 30 and 32)
- new provisions on sexual harassment, whistleblower protection, and anti-intimidation (new Regulation 37,38, and 39).
- updated language on interim Executive Director compensation (Regulation 11)
- an amendment to change language from "bonus" to "one-off performance payments" (Regulation 20(g))

40. FAC18 recommends that the annual leave provision (Regulation 25c) is not amended and that the Secretariat will work on reducing excess staff leave and report back to FAC19 with an updated proposal regarding the annual leave provisions.

4.3 Proposed IT Security Framework

41. The Executive Director presented FAC18-2024-09, informing the FAC about ongoing efforts to secure the WCPFC's information and technology infrastructure. The WCPFC Secretariat has implemented various initiatives to strengthen cybersecurity and protect its data. Building on these efforts, the Secretariat proposed the development of a more structured IT Security Framework tailored to the WCPFC's needs.

42. The Executive Director highlighted the outcomes of internal and external penetration testing, which identified that overall security structure was robust. Emphasis was placed on the importance of effective security measures to mitigate cybersecurity threats.

43. In 2025, the organization plans an internal exercise to create a risk register, guided by the NIST framework to develop a suitable security framework. It was noted that this update does not include a budget request, but further progress will be shared with TCC and FAC next year.

6. FAC18 noted the information provided in FAC18-2024-09

AGENDA ITEM 5. REPORT FROM THE INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINING FUNDING FOR THE SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FUND

44. FAC Co-Chair (D. Power) presented FAC18-2024-03, Report from the Intersessional Working Group on the Special Requirements Fund. On 7 May 2024, the FAC Co-chairs sought expressions of interest from CCMs to support intersessional work to consider options to establish a sustainable financing mechanism for the SRF in accordance with the recommendations from FAC17. Nominations were received from Cook Islands, NZ, Canada, and Australia with the US requesting to join later in the process.

45. The Co-Chair referred FAC participants to the following options presented in the paper:

Option 1a – Developed CCMs contribute an equal share ($\$300,000/9 = \$33,333$ each)

Option 1b – Non- SID CCMs contribute an equal share ($\$300,000/12 = \$25,000$ each)

Option 2a – Developed CCMs each contribute a share of the agreed SRF amount per the contribution formula

Option 2b – Non-SID CCMs each contribute a share of the agreed SRF amount per the contribution formula

Option 3 – Funding to be included in the core budget and all CCMs pay a share

46. The FAC co-chair also acknowledged the delegation paper that had been prepared by the FFA (WCPFC21-2024-DP02_rev1) and provided an opportunity for FFA members to present their paper.

47. Kiribati, on behalf of FFA, presented a statement which included a presentation of WCPFC21-2024-DP02_rev1. FFA Members continue to urge the WCPFC to adopt a sustainable funding mechanism for the Special Requirements Fund (SRF) at this meeting, addressing the requirements of Article 30 of the Convention. The revised proposal, outlined in Delegation Paper DP02_rev1, incorporates feedback from past discussions, including necessary amendments to the financial regulations to require developed CCMs to contribute annually to the SRF. The proposed funding of \$300,000 is consistent with the original 2018 SRF-IWG report and the amount shall be agreed annually by the Commission. This funding is to support SIDS by enabling their participation in key Commission meetings and broader capacity-building initiatives. With sufficient time for consultations since last year's FAC meeting, FFA Members call for immediate action to ensure equitable engagement and effective implementation of Article 30.

48. All delegations that provided views under this agenda item acknowledged the importance of the role of the SRF in supporting the effective participation of developing States, particularly Small Island Developing States including participating territories, in the work of the Commission. The voluntary contributions to the SRF which were made in 2024 by Canada, China and the United States were acknowledged.
49. Several CCMs also expressed their regret in not participating in the intersessional working group, and their appreciation to the co-chairs and the CCMs who have contributed to the work on these matters.
50. There was an extensive exchange of views of CCMs involving many delegations explaining their positions on the options presented in the Co-Chairs paper:
51. During discussions on sustainable financing for the Special Requirements Fund (SRF), several member states expressed strong support for proposals that involve contributions from developed members to the SRF. These members emphasized that the need for sustainable financing is not a new issue. They pointed out that the SRF faces near depletion each year. The increasing workload of the Commission, including intersessional activities, was highlighted. This workload requires greater resources for small island developing states (SIDS) to prepare for, participate in, and implement the Commission's decisions effectively. These members opposed options that would require SIDS to subsidize the SRF. They advocated for a fairer arrangement that reflects the fund's original purpose and intent.
52. Other members preferred options that avoid requiring a subset of members to make additional contributions. They could not support proposals that would impose financial obligations on specific members. These members emphasized the importance of equitable funding mechanisms that do not place undue burden on any particular group. Another group favored maintaining the current financial regulations. They were not prepared to commit to any mandatory provisions regarding contributions to the SRF.
53. An alternative suggestion was made to increase the number of funded participants at Commission meetings from one to two per developing member state and territories were appropriate. This approach aims to provide dedicated funding to support the effective participation of developing states. It would still allow for voluntary contributions to the SRF for capacity-building needs. There was also a proposal to include \$300,000 in the general budget to support the SRF's objectives for the upcoming year.
54. The Secretariat provided further clarification during the discussions. It was noted that the recent average draw-down on the SRF over the past few years was approximately \$260,000 to \$280,000. Additionally, it was clarified that a transfer of \$100,000 made in 2024 from the Fees and Trust Fund/CNM Contribution Fund was a one-off decision made possible due to extra funds being available.
55. In further sessions of the FAC, the Secretariat presented an option to allocate \$300,000 from the core budget specifically for the travel expenses of delegates from developing states and participating territories. This would adjust the annual assessed contributions, reducing the financial burden on SIDS by offsetting a portion of the costs.

56. Concerns were raised about the increasing financial burdens on SIDS, especially given that several are already in arrears. Some members requested that developed states cover the additional costs that SIDS were being asked to bear, to alleviate their financial challenges.
57. FAC agreed to explore and present additional alternatives aimed at easing the financial burden on SIDS and participating territories. The goal is to ensure their effective participation in future Commission activities without imposing undue financial strain.
58. Further options were put forward on 2 December by the Secretariat as below:

- Option 1.** Allocate USD300,000 within the General Account Fund (GAF) to meeting travel. Removes the current USD50,000 offset funded by the Fees and Trust Fund/CNM Contribution Fund to all members and applies USD50,000 offset proportionally to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (see FAC18-2024-3a).
- Option 2.** The same as Option 1 but an additional USD46,090 is taken from the Working Capital Fund to offset the full cost to SIDS for the additional funding included in the budget.
- Option 3.** The same as Option 1 but an additional USD46,090 is assessed proportionally on developed states to offset the full cost to SIDS for the additional funding included in the budget.
- Option 4.** “Option 1a” from the Intersessional Working Group on the Special Requirements Fund (FAC18-2024-03), which assesses USD33,333 on each developed CCM.
- Option 5.** “Option 1b” from the Intersessional Working Group on the Special Requirements Fund (FAC18-2024-03), which assesses USD25,000 on each non-SIDS CCM.
- Option 6.** “Option 2a” from the Intersessional Working Group on the Special Requirements Fund (FAC18-2024-03), which proportionally assesses USD300,000 on developed CCMs.

59. There were a range of views on the proposed options, but ultimately CCMs closed in on “Option 3” and a new “Option 3a” where the remaining USD46,090 would be assessed on non-SIDS proportionally and an “Option 3b” that assess the remaining USD46,090 on non-SIDS with an equal share. The Secretariat was tasked to provide an updated table showing country contributions for consideration.
60. When the FAC reconvened on the morning of 3 December, three options were presented for consideration. First, the offset could be assessed for each developed state individually. Second, the offset could be distributed proportionally among all non-SIDS members based on their budget contributions. Third, the offset could be equally split among all non-SIDS members. Some CCMs expressed support for either proportional contributions or an equal split among non-SIDS members. However, there was a general preference for proportional contributions, though one CCM requested additional time to consider the options.

61. When FAC reconvened on the afternoon of 3 December it was agreed that proportional contributions could be agreed for one year, with a future tasking to review next year.
62. Korea stated that it maintains its position that the sharing of USD 46,090 is a shared obligation to take the burden off the shoulders of the SIDS Members. As it is sharing the offset for that purpose, the sharing among the non-SIDS Members must be on an equal basis. Korea is still of the view that this is a matter of principle and highlights that it has exercised flexibility leading up to this point. Having said so, given the timing of the last day of the meeting, Korea is not going to block consensus on condition that this proportional sharing is only one-year arrangement to be applied in 2025, which was agreed by FAC 18.
63. A number of FFA members spoke to express their appreciation for the support of other Members to ensure the effective participation of SIDS in the meetings of the Commission. They reiterated the importance of ensuring sustainable financing for the SRF in the future.

64. FAC18 agreed to recommend that the following edits are made to the Financial Regulations:

*3.5 The draft budget shall include an item specifying the costs required to finance the travel and subsistence for ~~one~~ **two** representatives from each developing State Party to the Convention and, where appropriate, territories and possessions, to each meeting of the Commission and to meetings of relevant subsidiary bodies of the Commission.*

Removal of Financial Regulation 7.8

~~7.8 Financial Regulation 7.5 and 7.7 on the application process and reporting requirements, respectively, shall be waived for:-~~

~~a) one traveler from each small island developing States and Participating Territories delegation to meetings of the Annual Session of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies; and~~

~~b) the travel for the Chairs of SC, TCC, FAC Co-Chair and the WCPFC Vice Chair from SIDS to the Annual Session.~~

- 65. FAC18 also agreed to recommend** that for 2025 contributions for the additional \$46,090 would be split between non-SIDS on a proportional basis, and that this would be agreed for one year, with a future tasking to review the \$46,090 offset applied to non-SIDS next year.

AGENDA ITEM 6. WORK PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2025 AND INDICATIVE WORK PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2026 AND 2027

66. The Secretariat presented FAC18-2024-06 on the proposed budget for the Commission's work programme for 2025 and indicative Budgets for 2026 and 2027, in accordance with Article 18 of the WCPF Convention and Financial Regulation 3.
67. The budget proposal takes into account Commission decisions on the recommendations of the Scientific Committee, the Technical and Compliance Committee, the Northern Committee and the Finance and Administration Committee as well as any other matters FAC18 considered to have budgetary and resource implications. The budget also includes the proposed cost of living

increase for Secretariat local staff (Financial Regulations 19 (f)) but would require Commission review and explicit approval to be retained.

68. The Secretariat indicated there were several proposals with potential budget implications to be considered by the Commission and so cannot be included in the budget at this time; SC20 proposed changes to the WCPFC Meeting server which were recently quoted at around \$11,000 and the implications of intersessional Working Group activities.
69. As the figure of \$300,000 had been discussed as the level of funds required for the SRF, the Secretariat was tasked to prepare a draft budget applying Option 3 (cost shared among all CCMs) to inform Commission discussions on the options and source of funds.
70. Some CCMs questioned science related costs and sought to clarify if the funding for an additional stock assessment scientist was a temporary position until workloads reduced or an ongoing position. SPC confirmed there had been no reduction in workload and there was a need for this to be an ongoing position with continued funding.
71. The Commission's role in funding a project for New Zealand's albacore troll fishery was questioned. New Zealand indicated the proposed project reflected the importance of the juvenile stock in New Zealand's waters for the regional stock assessment and was currently being funded by the New Zealand industry. New Zealand noted that FAC had yet to consider SC20's project prioritization which would determine if this project would proceed.
72. The increase in funding for Project 42 (tuna tagging) was questioned. SPC clarified that the costs of the programme continued to increase each year with the full cost not being borne by the Commission in recent years. The increase reflected both the increased cost and the need for SPC to pass on the costs which were affecting their ability to deliver the project.
73. Some CCMs proposed an approach to consider the prioritized SC projects with options of projects with a priority score less than 5, or less than 6, not being funded in the year. The Co-Chair noted that projects not agreed for funding this year could be considered proposed for an alternate year. One CCM proposed dropping the lowest 5 ranked projects.
74. A Rev01 of the budget paper would be prepared to reflect the small increase in Annual Audit costs, SC upgrades to the Meeting server, SRF costs to CCMs, and possible Working Group costs. Areas of possible corrections would also be reviewed. The amended budget (FAC18-2024-06_Rev01) was circulated to members on 29 November 2024.
75. At the reconvened session on 2 December, the Secretariat presented updates on potential costs for future small working groups based on decisions that may be made at WCPFC21. There was general support for a FAD-IWG, Port State Measures-IWG and ROP-IWG meetings in 2024. Some CCMs showed significant support for funding a Science Management Dialogue on South Pacific albacore and wider harvest strategies, however, other CCMs did not consider this to be a priority.
76. There were different views on how to schedule the IWGs, especially concerning the timing of the TCC and other concurrent meetings.

77. With regards to the Science Budget, FAC18 supported removing the five lowest ranked projects (Projects 12,16,17,18 and 21) to reduce the budget by \$280,000.

78. At the reconvened session on 3 December, there was agreement among CCMs on holding meetings for ROP, PSM, and FAD IWGs in person alongside the TCC. There was agreement to add one day into the budget, and it was expected that one IWG could convene in the morning and a second in the afternoon. Other IWG work would need to be within the TCC meeting.

79. There was general support for a virtual meeting for SPA in 2025.

80. FAC18 recommends to the Commission a 2025 budget of USD9,783,471 (Annexes 1-3) pending any subsequent decision reached by WCPFC21 that will have an impact on the budget.

AGENDA ITEM 7. OTHER MATTERS

81. The Secretariat noted that some regional bodies have recently faced ransomware attacks. CMMs agreed with the Secretariat that the WCPFC should make it publicly known that the WCPFC will not pay any ransom demands.

82. FAC18 recommends that the Secretariat adopt and publicly announce a policy of not paying ransom demands in the event of a ransomware attack.

AGENDA ITEM 8. ADOPTION OF REPORT

83. FAC18 adopted this summary report which was tabled as WCPFC21-2024-FAC18.

AGENDA ITEM 9. CLOSE OF MEETING

84. FAC Co-Chairs Mr David Power (AU) and Putuh Suadela (ID) closed the final session of FAC18 at 3:45pm on 3 December 2024.

ANNEX 1

**Summary of estimated General Fund budgetary requirements for 2025
and indicative figures for 2026 and 2027 (USD)**

	<i>Approved budget 2024</i>	<i>Estimated expenditure 2024</i>	<i>Indicative budget 2025</i>	<i>Proposed budget 2025</i>	<i>Indicative budget 2026</i>	<i>Indicative budget 2027</i>
Part 1 - Administrative Expenses of the Secretariat						
Sub-Item 1.1	Staff Costs					
Professional Staff Salary	983,173	941,992	989,884	967,152	987,716	1,008,471
Professional Staff Benefits and Allowances	990,655	728,889	973,966	984,735	996,868	1,009,113
Professional Staff Insurance	181,521	165,738	200,817	174,229	176,682	179,209
Recruitment/Repatriation	25,565	27,247	0	25,565	25,565	25,565
Support Staff	563,422	547,461	621,161	669,825	693,588	702,764
Total, sub-item 1.1	2,744,337	2,411,327	2,785,827	2,821,507	2,880,420	2,925,122
Sub-Item 1.2	Other Personnel Costs					
Temporary Assistance/Overtime	16,500	16,500	16,500	16,500	16,500	16,500
Chairs Expenses	60,000	35,511	60,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Consultants (Note 1)	153,000	154,685	153,000	153,000	153,000	153,000
Total, sub-item 1.2	229,500	206,696	229,500	219,500	219,500	219,500
Sub-item 1.3	Official Travel					
Sub-item 1.4	General Operating Expenses					
Electricity, Water, Sanitation	42,000	46,689	42,000	48,000	48,000	48,000
Communications/Courier	84,000	82,026	82,000	84,000	84,000	84,000
Office Supplies & Fuel	41,000	40,854	41,000	41,000	41,000	41,000
Audit	7,000	12,742	7,000	17,510	18,540	18,540
Bank Charges	13,000	10,783	13,000	13,000	13,000	13,000
Official Hospitality	10,000	6,751	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Community Outreach	8,000	7,913	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
Miscellaneous Services	6,000	5,497	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Security	110,867	108,387	110,867	117,065	117,065	117,065
Training	12,000	12,779	12,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Total, sub-item 1.4	333,867	334,421	331,867	359,575	360,605	360,605
Sub-item 1.5	Capital Expenditure					
Vehicles	22,000	13,000	0	0	22,000	0
Information Technology	48,400	45,032	48,400	48,400	48,400	48,400
Furniture and Equipment	32,000	29,564	32,000	32,000	32,000	32,000
Total, sub-item 1.5	102,400	87,596	80,400	80,400	102,400	80,400
Sub-item 1.6	Maintenance					
Vehicles	6,000	6,512	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Information and Communication Technology	169,039	184,207	169,039	191,012	179,912	179,912
Website Hosting	20,130	26,877	20,130	26,877	26,877	26,877
Buildings & Grounds	63,000	62,573	63,000	63,000	63,000	63,000
Gardeners and Cleaners	92,568	90,358	92,568	97,743	97,743	97,743
Insurance	28,500	29,250	28,500	29,250	29,250	29,250
Total, sub-item 1.6	379,237	399,776	379,237	413,882	402,782	402,782
Sub-item 1.7	Meeting Services					
Annual Session	205,000	245,000	205,000	225,000	205,000	205,000
Scientific Committee	220,000	187,250	220,000	235,000	220,000	220,000
Northern Committee (Note 2)	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000
Technical and Compliance Committee	174,800	167,430	174,800	174,800	174,800	174,800
Funding for Working Groups	0	0	0	25,000	0	0
Total, sub-item 1.7	617,800	617,680	617,800	677,800	617,800	617,800
Sub-item 1.8	Future Work - Commission (Note 3)					
Sub-item 1.9	Funding for Developing CCM to Meetings					
TOTAL, Section 1/Item 1	4,607,141	4,239,728	4,844,631	5,072,663	5,303,506	5,326,208

	Approved budget 2024	Estimated expenditure 2024	Indicative budget 2025	Proposed budget 2025	Indicative budget 2026	Indicative budget 2027
ANNEX 1 (continued)						
Part 2 - Science & Technical & Compliance Programme						
Section 2 (Item 2)						
Sub-item 2.1	Scientific Services (SPC) (Note 4)					
	1,000,734	1,000,734	1,020,749	1,020,749	1,041,164	1,061,987
Sub-item 2.2	Scientific Research					
Additional Resourcing SPC (Note 4)	180,204	180,204	183,808	183,808	187,484	191,234
SPC additional stock assessment scientist (Note 4)	165,000	165,000	168,300	168,300	171,666	175,099
P35b Pacific Marine Specimen Bank	107,373	107,373	109,520	109,520	111,711	113,945
P42 Pacific Tuna Tagging Project	800,000	800,000	875,000	875,000	950,000	950,000
P68 Estimation of Seabird Mortality	0	0	0	0	30,000	0
P90 Fish Lengths/Weights Conversion Analyses	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	0	0
P108 WCPO silky shark assessment	100,000	100,000	0	0	0	0
P113b Template for stock status/manag. advice	40,000	40,000	0	0	0	0
P114 Improved cannery receipt data	60,000	60,000	35,000	0	0	0
P19X5 Updated reproductive biol. of trop. tunas (Note 4)	44,000	44,000	0	0	0	0
P19X6 (P121) Ecosystem and Climate Indicators	0	0	20,000	20,000	15,000	15,000
P19X7 Scoping study on longline effort creep	30,000	30,000	0	0	0	0
P19X8 (P123) Scoping next generation of assess. software	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	0
P19X9 Manta/mobulid/whale shark assessment	0	0	56,000	0	0	0
P19X10 (P124) Oceanic whitetip assessment	60,000	60,000	60,000	80,000	0	0
P19X11 Sampling strategy for shark biological data	0	0	40,000	0	0	0
P20X04 Biology from billfish samples in LL fisheries	0	0	0	40,000	40,000	40,000
P20X05 Developing a sampling strategy for sharks	0	0	0	40,000		
P20X07 Reconciling size composition data collection	0	0	0	50,000		
P20X08 Connectivity of YFT/SKJ in WPEA&WCPFC-CA	0	0	0	60,000		
Total, sub-item 2.2	1,656,577	1,656,577	1,617,628	1,696,628	1,555,861	1,485,278
Sub-item 2.3	Technical & Compliance Programme					
ROP Travel for Audits and Training	35,000	7,177	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000
ROP - Consultancy	85,000	85,000	85,000	85,000	85,000	85,000
ROP Data Management	923,904	923,904	923,904	923,904	923,904	923,904
Vessel Monitoring System - Capital Costs	20,000	0	20,000	0	0	0
Vessel Monitoring System	200,000	148,238	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Vessel Monitoring System - Airtime	214,527	202,726	218,818	214,527	218,818	223,194
IT Security Audit	10,500	0	10,500	0	0	0
Information Management System (Note 5)	120,000	122,531	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Monthly Reports and CCM Dashboards (Note 6)	40,000	25,600	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
CMS Future Work (Note 7)	50,000	65,633	30,000	30,000	30,000	20,000
Enhance Secretariat Analytical Capacity (Note 8)	80,000	76,680	80,000	80,000	40,000	40,000
Compliance and Monitoring Analyst Consultant (Note 9)	30,000	35,400	0	0	0	0
Repeatable reports - next generation approach (Note 10)	0	0	0	30,000	30,000	30,000
E-Monitoring and E-Reporting Activities	30,000	39,264	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
CCM/Staff Training (Note 11)	25,000	0	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Targeted Capacity Building	40,000	0	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Workshops/IATTC Cross Endor. Train.	10,000	0	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Regional Capacity Building Workshops (Note 12)	130,000	130,000	130,000	130,000	130,000	130,000
Total, item 2.3	2,043,931	1,862,153	1,998,222	1,993,431	1,957,722	1,952,098
TOTAL, Section 2/Item 2	4,701,242	4,519,464	4,636,599	4,710,808	4,554,746	4,499,363
Total, Parts 1 & 2	9,308,383	8,759,192	9,481,230	9,783,471	9,858,252	9,825,571

Note 1: Consultancies proposed are:

Legal support services (including travel)	\$65,000
Meetings' rapporteur (including travel)	\$63,000
Miscellaneous Consultancies	\$25,000
	<hr/>
	\$153,000

Note 2: Northern Committee

As per WCPFC9, additional funds will be assessed from non-developing state members of the NC to fund attendance at the NC meeting by developing states and territories if needed.

Note 3: Sub-item 1.8 Future Work - Commission

Budget line added in 2020 to account for unidentified future work that may be required by the Commission. Amount reduced to \$0 for the proposed 2025 budget with the additional projects under Scientific Research.

Note 4: Section 2 Science programme

- Refer to Annex 12 and Para 3 of Annex 13 for SPC scientific services, additional resourcing, and additional scientists
- Refer to Para 4 of Annex 13 for job descriptions of the proposed projects for 2025 funding support

Note 5: Information Management System

2025/26 - Includes continual improvements to IT-related tools to improve ease of use for CCMs to manage their own reporting (refer to TCC19-2023-22)

Note 6: Monthly Reports and CCM Dashboards

Renamed AR Part 2/CMS Online Host. and Pub. - because AR Part 2 and CMR system upgrades to be completed in 2025 - reflects a shift to consider additional opportunities to support CCMs with their own reporting

Note 7: CMS Future Work

2025 - for CCFs subsampling approach improvements, planned CMR system report enhancements and obligation compliance rating trends

Note 8: Enhance Secretariat Analytical Capacity

2025/26 - continuing exploration of work that delivers strategic solutions, to better support the current and future information management needs of the Commission (refer TCC20-2024-04).

Note 9: Compliance and Monitoring Analyst Consultant

2024/25 - TCC19 supported supplementary dedicated analytical capacity for the Secretariat in 2024 and 2025 (TCC19 Outcomes para 61). Focus includes exploring what might be needed to assist the Secretariat in understanding the potential uses of data from the Commissions monitoring programmes, with an initial focus on Secretariat support to VMS monitoring, high seas transshipment monitoring and high seas pocket management, and optimize with the support of routine reports the Secretariats and CCMs joint work to address data quality issues and gaps affecting monitoring (refer TCC19-2023-18).

Note 10: Repeatable reports - next generation approach

2024/26 - To deliver efficiencies in the Secretariat's generation of required annual reporting, supports continuous improvement in the editorial work and leverages recent work to improve data management in the compliance area (refer TCC20-2024-04)

Note 11: CCM/Staff Training Guidance and Learning Aids

Renamed CCM/Staff VMS Training to broaden the scope of the intended activities, including support for training guidance and learning aids

Note 12: Regional Capacity Building Workshops

FFA/SPC to advise on the use of these funds

ANNEX 2

Proposed General Fund financing table for 2025

Proposed budget expenditure total	9,783,471
less	
Estimated interest	(3,400)
Transfer from Working Capital Fund	(500,000)
CNM Contributions Fund	0
Total assessed contributions	<u><u>9,280,071</u></u>

Proposed General Fund financing table for 2026

Proposed budget expenditure total	9,858,252
less	
Estimated interest and other income	(3,500)
Transfer from Working Capital Fund	(350,000)
CNM Contributions Fund	0
Total assessed contributions	<u><u>9,504,752</u></u>

Proposed General Fund financing table for 2027

Proposed budget expenditure total	9,825,571
less	
Estimated interest and other income	(3,500)
Transfer from Working Capital Fund	(350,000)
CNM Contributions Fund	0
Total assessed contributions	<u><u>9,472,071</u></u>

ANNEX 3

Schedule of contributions based on the Commission's contribution formula

2025 Contribution Table										
<i>Member</i>	<i>Base fee component: uniform share 10% of budget</i>	<i>National wealth component: 20% of budget</i>	<i>Catch component: 70% of budget</i>	<i>Addition for Northern Committee</i>	<i>Addition by Non-SIDS for SIDS offset</i>	<i>SIDS Offset</i>	Total	<i>Percent of Budget by member</i>	<i>Offset for Small Island Developing States*</i>	<i>Total of component s: 100% of budget**</i>
Australia	35,693	117,611	15,475	0	1,263	0	170,042	1.85%	0	170,042
Canada	35,693	109,303	42	0	1,085	0	146,122	1.59%	0	146,122
China	35,693	236,699	193,784	0	3,490	0	469,666	5.10%	0	469,666
Cook Islands	35,693	1,010	18,738	0	0	1,786	53,655	0.61%	36,259	89,914
European Union	35,693	274,570	81,820	0	2,934	0	395,017	4.29%	0	395,017
Federated States of Micronesia	35,693	6,662	543,405	0	0	18,868	566,892	6.41%	18,868	585,760
Fiji	35,693	8,658	23,223	0	0	2,177	65,398	0.74%	2,177	67,574
France	35,693	110,477	14,900	0	1,205	0	162,275	1.76%	0	162,275
Indonesia	35,693	22,498	191,422	0	1,868	0	251,481	2.73%	0	251,481
Japan	35,693	130,172	1,099,344	0	9,469	0	1,274,678	13.84%	0	1,274,678
Kiribati	35,693	5,436	525,564	0	0	18,254	548,438	6.20%	18,254	566,692
Korea	35,693	80,341	1,055,298	0	8,766	0	1,180,098	12.81%	0	1,180,098
Marshall Islands	35,693	2,100	299,158	0	0	10,854	326,097	3.69%	20,002	346,099
Nauru	35,693	639	375,909	0	0	13,279	398,962	4.51%	45,177	444,139
New Zealand	35,693	80,905	18,763	0	1,013	0	136,374	1.48%	0	136,374
Niue	35,693	91	5	0	0	1,153	34,636	0.39%	28,244	62,880
Palau	35,693	903	40	0	0	1,180	35,455	0.40%	22,960	58,416
Papua New Guinea	35,693	4,907	162,606	0	0	6,546	196,660	2.22%	6,546	203,206
Philippines	35,693	11,912	113,186	0	1,203	0	161,994	1.76%	0	161,994
Samoa	35,693	6,311	5,918	0	0	1,544	46,378	0.52%	1,544	47,921
Solomon Islands	35,693	3,737	69,799	0	0	3,518	105,710	1.19%	3,518	109,229
Chinese Taipei	35,693	63,064	987,076	0	8,126	0	1,093,959	11.88%	0	1,093,959
Tonga	35,693	5,389	593	0	0	1,342	40,332	0.46%	4,238	44,570
Tuvalu	35,693	570	150,449	0	0	6,014	180,697	2.04%	17,226	197,923
United States of America	35,693	427,866	293,615	0	5,667	0	762,841	8.28%	0	762,841
Vanuatu	35,693	5,685	255,914	0	0	9,576	287,715	3.25%	9,576	297,292
Totals	928,007	1,717,516	6,496,049	0	46,090	96,090	9,091,572	100%	234,588	9,326,161

* To be offset by the CNM Contributions Fund.

** Total includes \$46,090 Offset for SIDS

ANNEX 3 Cont.

Offset for Small Island Developing States as per Financial Regulation 5.2(b) (ii)					Offset for SIDS per WCPFC21			Total Offsets
Member	Population	Maximum Payable for wealth component	National wealth component	Offset for Small Island Developing States	Percent of total budget	Percent of General Offset	General Offset for SIDS	
Cook Islands	20,200	1,010	35,483	34,473	0.6%	1.9%	1,786	36,259
Federated States of Micronesia	115,220	5,761	6,662	0	6.4%	19.6%	18,868	18,868
Fiji	936,380	46,819	8,658	0	0.7%	2.3%	2,177	2,177
Kiribati	133,510	6,676	5,436	0	6.2%	19.0%	18,254	18,254
Marshall Islands	42,000	2,100	11,248	9,148	3.7%	11.3%	10,854	20,002
Nauru	12,780	639	32,537	31,898	4.5%	13.8%	13,279	45,177
Niue	1,819	91	27,182	27,091	0.4%	1.2%	1,153	28,244
Palau	18,060	903	22,683	21,780	0.4%	1.2%	1,180	22,960
Papua New Guinea	10,329,939	516,497	4,907	0	2.2%	6.8%	6,546	6,546
Samoa	225,680	11,284	6,311	0	0.5%	1.6%	1,544	1,544
Solomon Islands	740,420	37,021	3,737	0	1.2%	3.7%	3,518	3,518
Tonga	107,770	5,389	8,284	2,895	0.5%	1.4%	1,342	4,238
Tuvalu	11,400	570	11,782	11,212	2.0%	6.3%	6,014	17,226
Vanuatu	334,510	16,726	5,685	0	3.3%	10.0%	9,576	9,576
Total				138,498	33%	100%	96,090	234,588

Additional Funding for NC as agreed in WCPFC9-2012-22 FAC 6 Summary Report 5.4 (25)

Non-developing States Members of NC	Percent of total budget	Percent of NC fund	Additional cost
Canada	1.56%	3.0%	0
China	5.02%	9.5%	0
Japan	13.63%	25.9%	0
Korea	12.62%	23.9%	0
Chinese Taipei	11.70%	22.2%	0
United States of America	8.16%	15.5%	0
Total	52.70%	100.00%	0

ANNEX 3 Cont.

Schedule of contributions based on proposed 2025 budgets without the Offset for Small Island Developing States and Additional funds Assessed on Non-Developing States Members of NC

Member	2025					2026 Indicative		2027 Indicative	
	Base fee component: uniform share 10% of budget	National wealth component: 20% of budget	Catch component: 70% of budget	Total of components: 100% of budget	% of budget by member	Total of components: 100% of budget	% of budget by member	Total of components: 100% of budget	% of budget by member
Australia	35,693	117,611	15,475	168,779	1.82%	172,866	1.82%	172,271	1.82%
Canada	35,693	109,303	42	145,037	1.56%	148,549	1.56%	148,038	1.56%
China	35,693	236,699	193,784	466,176	5.02%	477,463	5.02%	475,821	5.02%
Cook Islands	35,693	35,483	18,738	89,914	0.97%	92,091	0.97%	91,775	0.97%
European Union	35,693	274,570	81,820	392,083	4.22%	401,576	4.22%	400,195	4.22%
Federated States of Micronesia	35,693	6,662	543,405	585,760	6.31%	599,942	6.31%	597,879	6.31%
Fiji	35,693	8,658	23,223	67,574	0.73%	69,210	0.73%	68,972	0.73%
France	35,693	110,477	14,900	161,070	1.74%	164,970	1.74%	164,402	1.74%
Indonesia	35,693	22,498	191,422	249,613	2.69%	255,656	2.69%	254,777	2.69%
Japan	35,693	130,172	1,099,344	1,265,209	13.63%	1,295,841	13.63%	1,291,385	13.63%
Kiribati	35,693	5,436	525,564	566,692	6.11%	580,413	6.11%	578,417	6.11%
Korea	35,693	80,341	1,055,298	1,171,332	12.62%	1,199,691	12.62%	1,195,566	12.62%
Marshall Islands	35,693	11,248	299,158	346,099	3.73%	354,478	3.73%	353,260	3.73%
Nauru	35,693	32,537	375,909	444,139	4.79%	454,892	4.79%	453,328	4.79%
New Zealand	35,693	80,905	18,763	135,361	1.46%	138,638	1.46%	138,161	1.46%
Niue	35,693	27,182	5	62,880	0.68%	64,402	0.68%	64,181	0.68%
Palau	35,693	22,683	40	58,416	0.63%	59,830	0.63%	59,624	0.63%
Papua New Guinea	35,693	4,907	162,606	203,206	2.19%	208,126	2.19%	207,410	2.19%
Philippines	35,693	11,912	113,186	160,791	1.73%	164,684	1.73%	164,117	1.73%
Samoa	35,693	6,311	5,918	47,921	0.52%	49,081	0.52%	48,913	0.52%
Solomon Islands	35,693	3,737	69,799	109,229	1.18%	111,873	1.18%	111,488	1.18%
Chinese Taipei	35,693	63,064	987,076	1,085,832	11.70%	1,112,122	11.70%	1,108,298	11.70%
Tonga	35,693	8,284	593	44,569	0.48%	45,649	0.48%	45,492	0.48%
Tuvalu	35,693	11,782	150,449	197,923	2.13%	202,715	2.13%	202,018	2.13%
United States of America	35,693	427,866	293,615	757,174	8.16%	775,506	8.16%	772,840	8.16%
Vanuatu	35,693	5,685	255,914	297,292	3.20%	304,489	3.20%	303,442	3.20%
Totals	928,007	1,856,014	6,496,049	9,280,071	100.00%	9,504,752	100.00%	9,472,071	100.00%

ANNEX 3 Cont.**Offset by Non-SIDS - Proportionally**

CCM	Contribution percent	Extrapolated percentage	Total
Australia	1.85%	2.74%	\$ 1,263
Canada	1.59%	2.36%	\$ 1,085
China	5.10%	7.57%	\$ 3,490
European Union	4.29%	6.37%	\$ 2,934
France	1.76%	2.62%	\$ 1,205
Indonesia	2.73%	4.05%	\$ 1,868
Japan	13.84%	20.54%	\$ 9,469
Korea	12.81%	19.02%	\$ 8,766
New Zealand	1.48%	2.20%	\$ 1,013
Philippines	1.76%	2.61%	\$ 1,203
Chinese Taipei	11.88%	17.63%	\$ 8,126
United States of America	8.28%	12.29%	\$ 5,667
Total	67.37%	100.00%	\$ 46,090