



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
THIRD REGULAR SESSION**

13-24 August 2007
Honolulu, United States of America

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC
COMMITTEE, THE NORTHERN COMMITTEE AND THE SCIENTIFIC
COMMITTEE IN RESPECT TO THE NORTHERN STOCKS**

WCPFC-SC3/GN IP-2

Paper prepared by the Secretariat

Introduction

The Scientific Committee (SC), at its second regular session at Manila, Philippines, 7-18 August 2006 noted that, "...as detailed presentations of the relevant stock assessments were not considered by the Scientific Committee, it had no basis to comment upon the substance of the recommendations from the ISC" (paragraph 165, SC Summary Report). Recognizing that a review of the interim arrangements for the Commission's science structure and function is scheduled for the near future, this paper has been prepared to:

- provide background information on the institutional relationships within the Commission in respect of the provision of scientific information and advice, with particular emphasis on northern stocks, and
- provide a basis for discussion of options for the provision of scientific information and advice in respect of northern stocks under the SC3 Agenda 4.10 b.

This paper consists of a brief introduction of the ISC, the functional collaboration discussed at Preparatory Conference, the memorandum of understanding recently signed between the ISC and the WCPFC, and options for consideration.

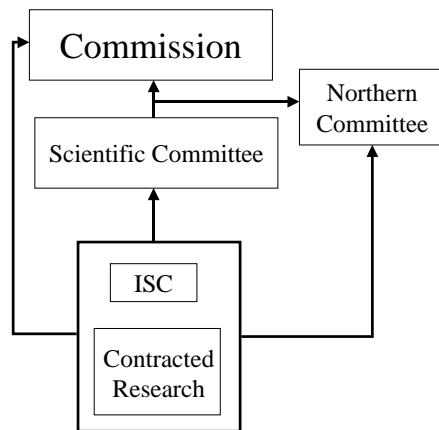
International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC)

The ISC was established in 1995 to enhance scientific research and cooperation for conservation and rational utilization of the species of tuna and tuna-like fishes which inhabit the North Pacific Ocean during a part or all of their life cycle. It also aimed to establish the scientific groundwork to create a multilateral regime for the conservation and rational utilization of these species in this region. The ISC is composed of Plenary Session and six working groups (Statistical WG, Pacific bluefin tuna WG, Albacore WG, Swordfish WG, Marlins WG, Bycatch WG). Members include Canada, China, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Korea, Mexico and the USA and the FAO, IATTC, PICES and SPC as non-voting members. The activities of the ISC include:

- 1) Regularly assess and analyze fishery and other relevant information concerning the species covered;
- 2) Prepare a report on its findings or conclusions on the status of such species such as trends in population abundance of such species, developments in fisheries, and conservation needs;
- 3) Strive to adopt reports and findings by consensus of all Members, however, it is not necessary that consensus be achieved on all matters, and reports and findings may reflect options and differing views when a consensus has not been achieved;
- 4) Formulate proposals for conduct of and, to the extent possible, coordinate international and national programs of research addressing such species; and
- 5) Consider any other matters, as appropriate, at the request of one of the members.

Information flow agreed at the Preparatory Conference

At PrepCon 6, WG II produced and discussed a schematic that illustrated the flow of scientific information and advice from the ISC (Annex III, WCPFC/PrepCon/38) as follows.



(Annex III, WCPFC/PrepCon/38)

Possible scheme for flow of scientific information and advice in respect to the northern stocks

The Working Group II at PrepCon 7 agreed to the science structure as illustrated above (paragraph 17, WCPFC/PrepCon/45). The Final Report of the Preparatory Conference includes this as one of PrepCon's recommendations to the Commission (paragraph 75, WCPFC/PrepCon/48).

MOU between the WCPFC and the ISC

Part I of the MOU between the WCPFC and the ISC describes the information flow from the ISC to the WCPFC:

- The Northern Committee may request from the ISC scientific information and advice regarding fish stocks (generally those stocks occurring mostly north of the 20° parallel of north latitude; see Annex 1) for response prior to each meeting of the Northern Committee. This formal request will be transmitted expeditiously to the ISC. The Commission will, if requested, provide data necessary for the scientific analysis to be conducted by the ISC.
- The ISC will provide requested scientific information and advice in accordance with this MOU one (1) month before the annual meetings of the Northern Committee. ISC will also provide the requested scientific information and advice to the Commission and the Scientific Committee. This scientific information and advice will follow the standard presented in

Annex 2 for standard (recurring) requests or as mutually agreed upon for special requests (see also Part III of the MoU).

- The ISC will provide its normal Committees and Working Group reports, prepared under the Rules and Procedures for the Conduct of the ISC Committee and Subsidiary Bodies, including relevant background reports, directly to the Northern Committee, the Commission, and the Scientific Committee.
- ISC scientific information and advice will be presented at the annual meeting of the Northern Committee and the Scientific Committee, and may be presented to the Commission by the Chair of the ISC, or a designate, and advisors from the ISC Working Groups, as appropriate. The participation costs of the ISC Chair, or designate, and advisers from the ISC Working Groups will be borne by the Member Governments of the ISC Chair and Working Group advisors.

The MoU therefore provides that, in addition to the provision of its meeting reports, including relevant background reports, the ISC will provide scientific information and advice, requested by the Northern Committee (NC), directly to the NC, SC and the Commission, and present those at their annual meetings, as appropriate.

The mandate of NC is to make recommendations on the implementation of such conservation and management measures as may be adopted by the Commission for the area north of the 20° parallel of north latitude and on the formulation of such measures in respect of stocks which occur mostly in this area. The function of the SC includes the review of the results of research and analyses and reporting to the Commission its findings or conclusions on the status of target stocks or non-target or associated or dependent species 'in the Convention Area'. If the SC is to include northern stocks in its deliberations and advise the Commission in respect of such stocks in the Convention Area, then the SC will require the supporting data sets and assessment details for those stocks - as noted in the paragraph 165 of the SC2 Summary Report.

The Plenary Session of the ISC also reviews detailed assessments of northern stocks reported from its subsidiary working groups and prepares a report on its findings or conclusions on the status of such stocks and conservation needs. This is the same as applies in the SC in respect of information and advice provided by its subsidiary SWGs. If the SC wishes to review the detailed assessments for the northern stocks there is potential for overlap with the work of the ISC WGs and the ISC Plenary. Additional considerations would include meeting time constraints and costs to involve ISC scientists in the SC.

The purpose of the SC3 Agenda 4.10 b (Information flow of northern stocks) is to clarify this possible duplication of roles and responsibilities.

Options for discussion

The main issue relates to a transparent and effective process for providing management advice and recommendations to the Commission on northern stocks. Focusing on the functional distinction between the SC and NC, and the apparent need to clarify the relationship between the ISC and the NC and SC, three options are offered for discussion:

- 1) For the SC and the NC to receive the same scientific information and advice on northern stocks and other stocks as requested by the NC from the ISC Plenary based on the work of the ISC WGs. This, in effect, is the current practice. The SC may chose to provide an opinion on the assessments to the NC, as appropriate. The SC or the NC may request an independent assessment of the advice provided, if considered necessary.

- 2) For the NC to review the status of 'northern stocks' as assessed by the ISC Plenary (currently, 'northern stocks' include northern Pacific bluefin, northern albacore and the northern stock of swordfish) and provide management advice to the Commission. If necessary, other northern species may be included in the list of 'northern stocks', subject to the decision by the Commission. In this case, the SC would have no role in dealing with such stocks. The SC's role in respect of stocks occurring mostly in the area north of 20°N would principally concern those stocks not formally identified as northern stocks including by-catch species such as sea turtles and sea birds.
- 3) For the SC to review the details of ISC-WG research outcomes at the relevant SC-SWG sessions, report the results of those reviews to the SC Plenary so that the SC can prepare and provide to the NC and the Commission management information and advice on such northern stocks. This will duplicate the work of the ISC at the SC meeting.

The SC is invited to consider the respective roles and responsibilities of the NC and the SC for northern stocks, in addition to clarifying the information flow from the ISC to the WCPFC.