

COMISION INTERAMERICANA DEL ATUN TROPICAL (CIAT) INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION (IATTC)

MEMORANDUM

10 July 2025
Ref.: 0373-410

To: Commissioners and Heads of Delegation
c.c.: Bolivia, Chile, Honduras, Indonesia and Liberia
From: Arnulfo Franco, Director
Re: 2nd Joint IATTC-WCPFC Informal Meeting of the Management of South Pacific Albacore
(31 July 2025 – by videoconference) – meeting documents

As a follow-up to memorandum Ref. 0324-410 dated 20 June 2025 please find attached several documents relevant to 2nd Joint IATTC-WCPFC Informal Meeting of the Management of South Pacific Albacore, which will be held by videoconference on 31 July 2025 from 4PM to 6PM PDT (UTC-7) (i.e. 1 August, Pohnpei time).

These documents include:

- the Co-Chairs' Summary Report on the 1st Joint IATTC-WCPFC Informal Meeting on the Management of South Pacific Albacore,
- a draft Provisional 2026 Workplan for the IATTC-WCPFC Joint Working Group on South Pacific Albacore.

Both these documents were prepared in coordination between the IATTC and WCPFC Secretariats, as well as with the two Co-Chairs as appropriate.

For your convenience and easy reference, please find attached also a copy of the Consolidated Draft TORs for the Joint Working Group which have been already circulated through the 20 June memorandum.

As a reminder, the 2nd Informal Meeting will be held through the Zoom platform and the IATTC Secretariat will make the necessary arrangements to ensure simultaneous English-Spanish interpretation. Participants in this meeting in representation of IATTC CPCs should notify Ms. Monica Galvan (mgalvan@iattc.org) in order to ensure that they receive the corresponding invitation.

Annexes: as indicated. –

JOINT WCPFC AND IATTC INFORMAL MEETING ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE TUNA

Virtual Meeting

10 AM, 20 May 2025 (Pohnpei Time) / 4 PM, 19 May 2025 (Pacific Daylight Time)

Duration: 2 hours

CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY REPORT

SPAJWG-INF01-2025-00

OPENING REMARKS AND CONTEXT

1. The session was formally opened by the Executive Directors of the IATTC and WCPFC, who served as co-Chairs of the informal joint session. Each Executive Director welcomed the participants and emphasized the significance of this first informal meeting in initiating the process of establishing a Joint Working Group for the collaborative management of the South Pacific albacore fishery (SPAJWG). This step was taken following decisions by both Commissions on the issue of SPA at their respective annual meetings in 2024. Subsequently, WCPFC Members endorsed the idea of establishing a Joint Working Group in December 2024, with IATTC informally joining the initiative during the intersessional period.

2. The co-Chairs acknowledged the role assigned to the United States in facilitating the process by coordinating the drafting of the Terms of Reference (TOR). They emphasized that the goal is to develop a mutually agreeable version of the TOR that can be adopted by the IATTC at its 103rd Meeting in September 2025, and subsequently by the WCPFC at its Annual Session in December 2025, thereby enabling the SPAJWG to commence formal work in early 2026.

3. To ensure effective participation in the meeting, simultaneous interpretation was provided in English and Spanish, the working languages of the IATTC. This was made possible through the Zoom platform, which allowed participants to access dedicated interpretation channels managed by the interpreters' team.

4. Following the introductory remarks by the co-Chairs, the meeting was handed over to the Chairs of the IATTC and WCPFC Commissions, Dr. Andres Arens and Dr. Josie Tamate, respectively, to coordinate further discussions. Each of the Chairs provided opening remarks and echoed earlier comments about the importance of collaboration between the two organizations to effectively manage the South Pacific albacore fishery across the Pacific Ocean. The Chairs of the IATTC and WCPFC Commissions introduced the agenda, which was adopted without amendment (**Attachment A**).

5. Participants in the First Informal Virtual Session on Establishing a Joint Working Group on South Pacific Albacore Management (SPAJWG-INF01) included representatives from Australia, Chile, China, Ecuador, France, French Polynesia, Japan, Korea, Panama, Chinese Taipei, Tonga, United States of America, Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, Pacific Community, Marine Stewardship Council, the Nature Conservancy, IATTC Secretariat and WCPFC Secretariat. A list of participants is provided in **Attachment B**.

OVERVIEW OF CONSOLIDATED TERMS OF REFERENCE

6. A representative from the United States provided a general review of the consolidated draft TOR, which merged elements from drafts prepared by the WCPFC at its annual meeting in December 2024 and by the IATTC Secretariat in early 2025 (**Attachment C**). The representative highlighted key elements that were incorporated during the consolidation of the two draft TORs, including:

- A clause (Para 1) clarifying that organizations or individuals with scientific or practical fisheries expertise may be invited to participate by the SPAJWG or by either Commission.
- Specification (Para 2b) to enhance harmonization of harvest strategies and management actions through a workplan to be developed at its inaugural meeting in the first half of 2026.
- A provision (Para 2g) noting that the SPAJWG may undertake additional SPA-related tasks based on coordinated requests from both Commissions.
- Reporting responsibilities (Para 2h) to each Commission on the advances of the SPAJWG work.
- Decision-making processes in Para 6 suggest that consensus be the basis for all recommendations and conclusions.
- To optimize its work (para 8), the SPAJWG will coordinate with relevant subsidiary bodies and may seek input from diverse stakeholders, including organizations and individuals such as scientists and fishers.

COMMENTS AND REACTIONS TO THE DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

7. Participants expressed appreciation for the effort by the US in drafting the consolidated TOR and supported continuing the process. Several important comments were raised:

- A suggestion to allow time for a paragraph-by-paragraph review of the TOR before final adoption at a later meeting.
- Clarifications sought on stakeholder engagement language, especially in Para 8b, regarding “seek appropriate inputs” vs. “seek appropriate views” within formal SPAJWG processes.
- Several participants expressed concern about the second sentence of Paragraph 6 in the consolidated draft, which referred to the possibility of including majority and minority views in the SPAJWG’s recommendations if consensus could not be reached. They recommended either deleting this sentence or revising it with more precise language to ensure that the JWG may adopt recommendations only by complete consensus, without ambiguity. An observation was made regarding the participation status of territories such as French Polynesia, affirming the need for inclusive language that reflects their ability to participate in the SPAJWG under the respective frameworks of both Commissions, in a manner consistent with their basic instruments and, where applicable, established practice.

8. It was agreed that further refinement of the TOR would be undertaken intersessionally, with comments submitted to the Secretariats. The second informal virtual meeting is tentatively scheduled for late July to early August 2025.

PRELIMINARY TIMELINE AND WORK PLAN

9. A draft schedule was presented, outlining activities leading up to the launch of the SPAJWG in 2026. Key dates and milestones include:

- **May 2025:** First informal virtual meeting
- **June–July 2025:** Preparation of the work plan and timeline by the IATTC and WCPFC Secretariats and development by the United States of an update of the draft, consolidated TOR.

- **Late July–Early August 2025:** Second informal virtual meeting to finalize the TOR and work plan
- **September 2025:** Presentation of the draft TORs and work plan at the IATTC annual session, for adoption
- **December 2025:** Presentation of both documents at the WCPFC annual session, for adoption
- **Early 2026:** First formal meeting of the SPAJWG

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

10. Participants acknowledged the strong spirit of collaboration and agreed on the importance of this initiative for sustainable South Pacific albacore management. The following steps were confirmed:

- Circulation of the draft TOR and work plan for further written input
- Development of a full draft workplan to be prepared by both Secretariats
- Planning for the second informal session in July/August 2025 to finalize the TOR and workplan.

11. The Co-chairs reiterated the informal nature of the meeting and confirmed that a Co-Chairs' Summary Report would be prepared to serve as a record. All participants were thanked for their contributions and continued commitment.

**JOINT WCPFC AND IATTC WORKING GROUP MEETING ON THE MANAGEMENT OF
SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE TUNA
First Informal Session (SPAJWG-INF01)**

Agenda

- 1. Opening of the Meeting**
- 2. Adoption of the Agenda**
- 3. Draft Terms of Reference**
 - a. Background and context
 - b. Presentation of a consolidated draft (USA)
- 4. Timeline and Preliminary Considerations on a Workplan**
- 5. Other Issues**
- 6. Closure**

**JOINT WCPFC AND IATTC WORKING GROUP MEETING ON THE MANAGEMENT OF
SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE TUNA**

First Informal Session (SPAJWG-INF01)

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**JOINT WCPFC AND IATTC WORKING GROUP MEETING ON THE MANAGEMENT OF
SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE TUNA**

First Informal Session (SPAJWG-INF01)

**Draft Terms of Reference for the IATTC-WCPFC Joint Working Group on
South Pacific Albacore Tuna (SPAJWG)**

Taking into account the mandates for cooperation and coordination between the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) with respect to the south Pacific albacore tuna contained in, *inter alia*, IATTC Resolution C-24-04 and the recommendation adopted by WCPFC21 instructing the Chair of the WCPFC to help develop Terms of Reference for the establishment of a Joint Working Group;

Recognizing that South Pacific albacore is an important tuna species harvested by members of both Commissions;

In accordance with the provisions of Article XXIV of the Antigua Convention and Article 22 of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean;

Agree:

To establish an IATTC-WCPFC Joint Working Group on South Pacific albacore tuna (SPAJWG) to enhance cooperation between WCPFC and IATTC for South Pacific albacore tuna research and management, with the following terms of reference:

1. The SPAJWG shall be composed of representatives designated by Members of both Commissions, and who may be accompanied by such experts or advisors as each Member may deem appropriate. The SPAJWG may also include, as observers, representatives of relevant intergovernmental organizations as well as non-governmental organizations accredited to either Commission. Organizations or individuals with recognized scientific or practical fisheries experience in matters related to the work of the SPAJWG may also be invited to participate by the SPAJWG or by either Commission.
2. The functions of the SPAJWG shall be the following:
 - a. To develop a common understanding and approach for the conservation and management of South Pacific albacore in both convention areas;
 - b. To enhance the harmonization of harvest strategies and other conservation and management actions through, *inter alia*, the development of a workplan for the SPAJWG which shall be developed at its inaugural meeting in the first half of 2026;
 - c. To develop compatible and/or harmonized management arrangements or measures for South Pacific albacore, as appropriate, across all fisheries, including the coordination of catch and/or effort levels between the two Commissions;
 - d. To coordinate scientific research and analyses and facilitate the collection and exchange of relevant fisheries data, scientific knowledge and expertise;
 - e. To identify priority areas for improvement in monitoring, reporting, and data sharing;
 - f. To collaborate in the identification of ways to streamline the relevant decision-making processes within each Commission to ensure efficient progress towards the robust

- conservation and management of South Pacific albacore;
- g. To undertake additional tasks related to South Pacific albacore, as appropriate and pursuant to corresponding requests from both Commissions;
 - h. To report to each Commission on the advances of its work.
3. Each Commission will appoint a co-chair of the SPAJWG for the term each will determine.
 4. The Secretariats of both Commissions will coordinate the adoption and implementation of all arrangements needed for the work of the SPAJWG. This includes the preparation, translation and dissemination of meeting documents, information sharing, in a manner consistent with the applicable rules and procedures of each Commission. Unless otherwise provided for, the IATTC Secretariat shall be responsible for providing simultaneous English Spanish interpretation for meetings of the SPAJWG, and the translation of meeting documents between the two languages, as appropriate.
 5. Meetings of the SPAJWG will be convened by the Co-Chairs, consistent with the relevant rules of procedure of both Commissions, and in consultation with the Chair and Director of each Commission, in a format to be decided on a case-by-case basis (virtual, presential or hybrid), taking into account the matters to be discussed and *inter alia*, the availability of funding.
 6. The SPAJWG shall endeavor to adopt its conclusions and recommendations by consensus. If efforts to achieve consensus fail, the meeting reports shall so indicate and shall reflect the views of the majority and minority.
 7. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the SPAJWG:
 - a. where appropriate, shall be submitted first to the relevant subsidiary bodies of each Commission, for their consideration and/or endorsement and later submission to each Commission;
 - b. may be submitted to the Commissions directly, whenever they could not be considered and/or endorsed by the respective relevant subsidiary bodies or as directed by the Commissions themselves.
 8. In order to optimize its work, as appropriate, the SPAJWG, through the Co-Chairs:
 - a. will ensure coordination with other relevant subsidiary bodies of both Commissions, particularly with a view to seeking their inputs;
 - b. may seek appropriate inputs from all relevant stakeholders, such as inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations or natural persons such as scientists, researchers, managers, fishers, etc.
 9. These Terms of Reference shall enter into force at the time of their adoption by both Commissions, with the Terms of Reference and Workplan open for review by each Commission and revised as appropriate, annually.

**JOINT WCPFC AND IATTC WORKING GROUP MEETING ON THE
MANAGEMENT OF SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE TUNA
First Informal Session (SPAJWG-INF01)**

Virtual Meeting

9 AM, XX July/August 2025 (Pohnpei Time) / 3 PM, (XX-1) July/August 2025 (Pacific Daylight Time)

Duration: 3 hours/day for [2] days

**Provisional 2026 Workplan for the
IATTC–WCPFC Joint Working Group on South Pacific Albacore**

SPAJWG-INF02-2025-WP02

This Workplan has been developed on a provisional basis in anticipation of its consideration and adoption by the Joint IATTC–WCPFC Working Group on the Management of South Pacific Albacore (SPAJWG), which is expected to be established by the IATTC and the WCPFC at their upcoming annual meetings in 2025. Its purpose is to serve as a multi-year roadmap guiding collaboration between the two Commissions. The Workplan outlines a phased approach to harmonizing scientific analysis, coordinating management strategies, improving monitoring and data exchange, and advancing regionally compatible measures for the effective conservation and management of South Pacific albacore tuna fisheries.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

To support the effective implementation of this Workplan, the following cross-cutting issues will be duly taken into consideration throughout all phases:

- Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and developing Members engagement: Within the WCPFC, there is a need for financial and logistical support for delegates from SIDS and developing States. Similarly, within IATTC, there is the same need for its developing Members.
- Transparency: The need for all meeting documents, recommendations, and data-sharing protocols to be made available in English and Spanish.
- Stakeholder Involvement: The need to ensure, as appropriate, the participation of scientific experts, NGOs, and industry representatives to be invited as observers or advisors, consistently with the respective rules of procedure of each Commission.
- Capacity Building: The need to support the development of technical and institutional capacity in SIDS, developing Members, and Cooperating Non-Members, especially in scientific and monitoring capabilities.
- Communication and Outreach: The need to enhance understanding and visibility of SPAJWG's objectives and progress among stakeholders and the public.

REVIEW OF THE WORKPLAN

Once adopted by the Working Group, and to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness, the SPAJWG Workplan shall be subject to an annual review by SPAJWG participants at the end of each calendar year. This review will:

- Assess the progress made toward each planned activity;
- Identify and record completed or terminated actions;
- Flag any activities requiring adjustment, rollover, or intensified follow-up in the following year.

The results of the annual review shall inform the planning of subsequent SPAJWG meetings and be

reported to both Commissions. Any resulting comments or recommendations made by either Commission are reported back to the SPAJWG.

RESOURCE PLANNING AND BUDGETING

Consistent with the relevant provisions of the Terms of Reference, and in recognition of the resource requirements to implement certain activities under this Workplan, the two Commissions shall consider and endeavor to accommodate budgetary needs as follows:

- Activities requiring funding—such as joint meetings, stock assessments, modeling workshops, or stakeholder consultations—shall be identified in advance and their costs shall be determined.
- Each Commission shall explore opportunities to contribute within their regular annual budget cycles and consider joint funding arrangements where appropriate.
- Additional financial support may be sought through voluntary contributions, partnerships with donor agencies, or cost-sharing initiatives with participating Members, particularly for activities supporting SIDS participation or scientific collaboration.
- A consolidated annual budget estimate for SPAJWG activities shall be developed and presented during the planning process, aligned with the outputs of the annual Workplan review.

YEAR 1: 2026 — INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

A. First SPAJWG Meeting in the first half of 2026

1. Implementation of the SPAJWG Workplan

- The SPAJWG will review and consider the time frame, specific needs, and expected outcomes of the Workplan as needed

2. Overview of the SPA Management

- Summary of recent stock status based on stock assessment for WCPO, Pac-Pacific scale, and EPO only.
- Overview of current SPA management approaches adopted by both Commissions, including arrangements for the overlap area.
- Introduction to the development of Harvest Strategies for SPA by each Commission.

3. Review of Management Procedure Evaluations (subject to the progress of the SPA MP at WCPFC22)

- Review the adopted WCPFC SPA MP (draft schedule provided in **Table 1**), the outcomes of the first running of the MP, and the adopted SPA MP implementation CMM.
- Review the application of the WCPFC's 2025 MP outputs to SPA management for 2026.
- Review of the scope of the SPA MP in the context of the geographic area (including the overlap area) and the mixed fishery structure
- Review of the IATTC components (fishing level) in the SPA HS framework
- Develop a detailed plan of harvest strategy-related SPAJWG activities for 2026 and beyond.

Table 1. The WCPFC's South Pacific Albacore Management Arrangements in a repeating 3-year schedule (Proposed by the South Pacific Group¹ and Australia in December 2024; WCPFC21-2024-

¹ Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu

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Year	Scientific Services Provider	Scientific Committee	Commission
2025	- Run the MP (using data to 2023). - Support SC and Commission consideration of the MP.	- Provide advice to the Commission on the MP outputs for 2026- 2028.	- Develop/Review the SPA Management Arrangements CMM for 2026-2028 , taking into account the output of the MP.
2026		- Monitor the performance of the MP.	- Apply the SPA Management Arrangements CMM.
2027	- Perform full stock assessment (y _{last} = 2025).	- Monitor and review the performance of the MP, including potential exceptional circumstances, and advise the Commission.	- Apply the SPA Management Arrangements CMM. - Review the performance and use of the MP.
2028	- Run the MP (using data to 2026). - Support SC and Commission consideration of the MP.	- Monitor the performance of the MP. - Provide advice to the Commission on the MP outputs for the next management period (2029-2031).	- Review and revise the SPA Management Arrangements CMM for 2029-2031 , taking into account the output of the MP.
2029		- Monitor the performance of the MP.	- Apply the SPA Management Arrangements CMM.
2030	- Perform full stock assessment (y _{last} = 2028).	- Monitor and review the performance of the MP, including potential exceptional circumstances, and advise the Commission.	- Apply the SPA Management Arrangements CMM. - Review the performance and use of the MP.
2031	- Run the MP (using data to 2029). - Support SC and Commission consideration of the MP.	- Monitor the performance of the MP. - Provide advice to the Commission on the MP outputs for the next management period (2032-2034).	- Review and revise the SPA Management Arrangements CMM for 2032-2034, taking into account the output of the MP.
etc.	-	-	-

4. Compatible management measures

The SPAJWG will consider the effectiveness of the MP across both Convention areas to develop and recommend to both commissions compatible management measures, including quantitative limits, monitoring, reporting, data sharing arrangements, and coordination of the overlap area.

5. Preparing WCPFC's 2027 SPA stock assessment

- Establish a clear framework for coordination between SPC and IATTC scientists, including the development of intersessional meetings and communication channels to address key elements of the assessment, such as:
 - Input data requirements and exchange
 - Modeling approaches
 - Regional structure assumptions

- Determining the scope of the assessment, including whether it will be Pacific-wide or RFMO-specific, with separate components for WCPFC and IATTC.

The SPAJWG will facilitate this discussion and establish a timeline for data sharing between the two organizations.

- Promote methodological alignment between SPC-OFP and IATTC in stock assessment practices to ensure comparability and consistency of outputs.
- Explore the development of SPA-wide projection models that incorporate both catch numbers and catch weight, to enhance the robustness of future management advice.

6. Support and Review Project 100c (CKMR)² Outputs

- Review results from CKMR3 sampling (2023–2025) and explore data integration into management advice. (SPC, SC, SPAJWG, etc.)
- Begin planning CKMR-informed stock assessments or MSE tests for the 2029–2031 MP cycle.

B. Intersessional Activities toward 2027

The following issues, among others, may be discussed, subject to the availability of supporting documents and time constraints.

1. SPAJWG reference document

- Develop one reference document for SPAJWG, covering a summary of stock structure, stock status, catch and effort levels, current management system, harvest strategy framework, climate change impacts, etc.
- Develop a list of areas where monitoring, reporting, and data sharing could be improved

2. Data issues

- Recommend to both Commissions to consider the adoption of shared data standards and timelines for stock status evaluations – comparing assessments from the WCPO-only, Pan-Pacific, and EPO-only approaches – and review existing data exchange and monitoring mechanisms, including plans for CKMR sampling and integration with ongoing tagging programs under SPC coordination.

3. SPAJWG Research plan and budget

- With the support of both Secretariats, develop a scientific research plan for the SPAJWG's work, including any necessary budget implications, and recommend it to each Commission.
- Prior to the SPAJWG meeting, the respective research plans should be shared and consolidated, and the research responsibilities clearly assigned to each Commission to facilitate budget allocation between them.

² *Preparing WCP tuna fisheries for application of CKMR methods to resolve key stock assessment uncertainties, 2023-2025*

³ Accurately estimating absolute spawning biomass is a key challenge in WCPFC stock assessments. Close-Kin Mark-Recapture (CKMR) offers a practical solution, providing not only biomass estimates but also insights into population structure, connectivity, and natural mortality to improve management decisions.

Annex. The provisional and indicative schedule for SPAJWG Meetings, aligned with the regular meeting calendars of both Commissions, with a provisional proposed agenda for each meeting.

2025		2026	
		Jan-Mar.	1st SPAJWG Meeting (Hybrid?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting time • Venue • Agenda
20 May	1st Informal SPAJWG Meeting (online) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of DRAFT TOR • Consider elements to be included in the workplan (see Annex 1) • Confirm the 2nd Informal SPAJWG meeting date (29 July – 1 August) 	March	1st Formal SPAJWG Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of recent stock status from stock assessments • Review of the scope of the SPA MP in the context of the geographic area and the mixed fishery structure • Review of the WCPFC-adopted SPA MP, outcomes of the first MP run, and the SPA MP Implementation CMM • Review of the IATTC components (fishing level) in the SPA HS framework • Develop a scientific research plan with budget implications as needed for the SPAJWG work, assisted by both Secretariats, and recommend it to each Commission
June – July	Secretariats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a DRAFT workplan and timeline • Communicate with CCMs (WCPFC) and CPCs (IATTC) to refine the workplan • Both Secretariats draft the SPAJWG meeting cycles and decision-making structure 		
2-6 June	IATTC-SAC16	Early June	IATTC-SAC17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the SPAJWG budget and recommend it to the Commission if needed
29Jul (Tue)-01Aug (Fri)	2nd Informal SPAJWG Meeting (online) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize TOR • Review and finalize the Workplan and timeline prepared by both Secretariats • Recommend the meeting date, duration, (hybrid?), and meeting venue for the 1st in-person (?) SPAJWG meeting, SPAJWG-01 (this is important) 	Late July-early August	2nd Formal SPAJWG Meeting (if needed) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
13-21 August	WCPFC-SC21	Mid-August	WCPFC-SC22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the SPAJWG budget and

			recommend it to the Commission if needed
1-5 September	IATTC-103 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt TOR • Finalize and recommend the workplan to be adopted at the 1st SPAJWG in 2026 • Recommend the meeting date and venue for the 1st in-person (?) SPAJWG meeting, SPAJWG-01 	Early September	IATTC-104 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and endorse the SPAJWG budget
1-5 December	WCPFC22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt TOR – subject to the decisions by both RFMOs, the SPAJWG will be established. • Review the IATTC-recommended workplan and endorse/recommend it to SPAJWG-01 for adoption • Recommend the meeting date and venue for the 1st in-person (?) SPAJWG meeting, SPAJWG-01 	Early December	WCPFC23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and endorse the SPAJWG budget

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE IATTC-WCPFC JOINT WORKING GROUP ON SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE TUNA (SPA-JWG)

Taking into account the mandates for cooperation and coordination between the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) with respect to the south Pacific albacore tuna contained in, *inter alia*, IATTC Resolution C-24-04 and the recommendation adopted by WCPFC21 instructing the Chair of the WCPFC to help develop Terms of Reference for the establishment of a Joint Working Group;

Recognizing that south Pacific albacore is an important tuna species harvested by members of both Commissions;

In accordance with the provisions of Article XXIV of the Antigua Convention and Article 22 of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean;

Agree:

To establish an IATTC-WCPFC Joint Working Group (JWG) on south Pacific albacore tuna (SPA-JWG) to enhance cooperation between WCPFC and IATTC for South Pacific albacore tuna research and management, with the following terms of reference:

1. The SPA-JWG shall be composed of representatives designated by Members of both Commissions [and WCPFC Participating Territories], and who may be accompanied by such experts or advisors as each Member may deem appropriate. The SPA-JWG may also include, as observers, representatives of relevant intergovernmental organizations as well as non-governmental organizations accredited to either Commission. Organizations or individuals with recognized scientific or practical fisheries experience in matters related to the work of the SPA-JWG may also be invited to participate by the SPA-JWG.
2. The functions of the SPA-JWG shall be the following:
 - a. To develop a common understanding and approach for the conservation and management of south Pacific albacore in both convention areas;
 - b. To enhance the harmonization of harvest strategies and other conservation and management actions through, *inter alia*, the development of a workplan for the SPA-JWG which shall be developed at its inaugural meeting in the first half of 2026;
 - c. To develop compatible and/or harmonized management arrangements or measures for south Pacific albacore, as appropriate, across all fisheries, including the coordination of catch and/or effort levels between the two Commissions;
 - d. To coordinate scientific research and analyses and facilitate the collection and exchange of relevant fisheries data, scientific knowledge and expertise;
 - e. To identify priority areas for improvement in monitoring, reporting, and data sharing;
 - f. To collaborate in the identification of ways to streamline the relevant decision-

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making processes within each Commission to ensure efficient progress towards the robust conservation and management of south Pacific albacore;

- g. To undertake additional tasks related to south Pacific albacore, as appropriate and pursuant to corresponding requests from both Commissions;
 - h. To report to each Commission on the advances of its work.
- 3. Each Commission will appoint a co-chair of the SPA-JWG for the term each will determine.
- 4. The Secretariats of both Commissions will coordinate the adoption and implementation of all arrangements needed for the work of the SPA-JWG. This includes the preparation, translation and dissemination of meeting documents, information sharing, in a manner consistent with the applicable rules and procedures of each Commission. Unless otherwise provided for, the IATTC Secretariat shall be responsible for providing simultaneous English Spanish interpretation for meetings of the SPA-JWG, and the translation of meeting documents between the two languages, as appropriate.
- 5. Meetings of the SPA-JWG will be convened by the Co-Chairs, consistent with the relevant rules of procedure of both Commissions, and in consultation with the Chair and Director of each Commission, in a format to be decided on a case-by-case basis (virtual, presential or hybrid), taking into account the matters to be discussed and *inter alia*, the availability of funding.
- 6. The SPA-JWG shall adopt its conclusions and recommendations by consensus. If efforts to achieve consensus fail, the meeting reports shall so indicate and shall reflect the [SPA JWG discussion].
- 7. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the SPA-JWG:
 - a. where appropriate, shall be submitted first to the relevant subsidiary bodies of each Commission, for their consideration and/or endorsement and later submission to each Commission;
 - b. (b) may be submitted to the Commissions directly, whenever they could not be considered and/or endorsed by the respective relevant subsidiary bodies or as directed by the Commissions themselves.
- 8. In order to optimize its work, as appropriate, the SPA-JWG, through the Co-Chairs:
 - a. will ensure coordination with other relevant subsidiary bodies of both Commissions, particularly with a view to seeking their inputs;
 - b. may seek appropriate inputs from all relevant stakeholders, such as inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations or natural persons such as scientists, researchers, managers, fishers, etc.
- 9. These Terms of Reference shall enter into force at the time of their adoption by both Commissions, with the Terms of Reference and Workplan open for review by each Commission and revised as appropriate, annually.