**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**
**TWENTY-SECOND REGULAR SESSION**
11-19 August 2026
Apia, Samoa (Hybrid)

**Provisional Annotated Agenda**

**WCPFC-SC22-2026-03**
**5 June 2026**

## AGENDA ITEM 1 OPENING OF THE MEETING

The meeting will commence at 8:30 AM on Tuesday, August 11, 2026.

### 1.1 Welcome address

The Chair will welcome delegations from WCPFC Members, Cooperating Non-Members, participating Territories (CCMs), and Observers to the Twenty-Second Regular Session of the Scientific Committee (SC22). A senior official from the Government of Samoa, the Commission Chair, the WCPFC Executive Director, and the SC Chair will each be invited to deliver their opening address.

### 1.2 Meeting arrangements

The Chair will outline procedural matters, including the meeting schedule, administrative arrangements, and SC22 Theme Convenors.

### 1.3 Issues arising from the Commission

SC22 will consider relevant issues arising from the previous meetings of the Commission and the Scientific Committee.

### 1.4 Adoption of the agenda

SC22 will review the Provisional Agenda for adoption. Other matters that are not included in the Provisional Agenda may be proposed here for consideration under Agenda Item 12.

### 1.5 Reporting arrangements

The Secretariat will appoint a lead rapporteur to produce a draft SC22 Summary Report and an SC22 Outcomes Document. The Outcomes Document will contain the text of all decisions and recommendations adopted at SC22 and will be posted on the SC22 meeting page on the WCPFC website within seven (7) working days after the conclusion of SC22. Theme Convenors are required to arrange their support rapporteurs, as needed, to assist with the drafting of Theme recommendations. The SC22 Summary Report will be adopted intersessionally.

### 1.6 Intersessional activities of the Scientific Committee

The Chair, with support from the Secretariat, will report on SC's intersessional activities since its 21st meeting in 2025.

## AGENDA ITEM 2 REVIEW OF FISHERIES

### 2.1 Overview of Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) fisheries

The WCPFC Scientific Services Provider (SSP), the Pacific Community – Oceanic Fisheries Programme (SPC-OFP), and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) will present an overview of tuna fisheries in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO), including economic conditions for 2025.

As recommended by SC14[1], analyses and projections of economic conditions in WCPO fisheries will be presented under this agenda item. SC22 will be invited to provide supplementary information, questions, and comments.

### 2.2 Overview of Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) fisheries

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) will present an overview of the highly migratory species fisheries in the EPO. SC22 will be invited to provide supplementary information, questions, and comments.

### 2.3 Annual Report – Part 1 from Members, Cooperating Non-Members, and Participating Territories

All CCMs shall submit Part 1 of the Annual Report (the amended template is available at Template for Annual Report to the Commission, Part 1 under Guidelines on the WCPFC website) via the dedicated Document Submission link on the SC22 meeting site by 7 July 2026.

All submitted Part 1 Annual Reports are posted on the SC22 meeting page and will be taken as read (i.e. not presented at SC22). This agenda item is an opportunity for questions and clarifications ONLY on any of the reports.

### 2.4 Reports from regional fisheries bodies and other organisations

Organisations with WCPFC observer status may deliver a brief presentation (up to 3 minutes) on key issues relevant to the Scientific Committee's work.

## AGENDA ITEM 3 DATA AND STATISTICS THEME

### 3.1 Data gaps of the Commission

#### 3.1.1 Report on the WCPFC scientific data

SC22 will consider a report from the SSP on *Scientific Data Available to the WCPFC* and make relevant recommendations to the Commission that address any identified data gaps in WCPFC's scientific data holdings. The report will cover sources of data gaps, including historical and persistent data gaps, operational data coverage, incomplete data submissions, challenges in collecting size data, and limitations of current observer coverage rates.

#### 3.1.2 Reconciliation of size composition data for stock assessments (Project 127 and 127a)

SC22 will consider recommendations to improve size composition data sampling based on analyses of data coverage and sampling imbalances, as well as updated conversion factors derived from contemporary data, particularly for conversions with uncertain or missing source data, and provide comments and further guidance as needed. SC22 will also consider endorsement of a standard proforma with a set of questions to provide information on size data collections submitted to the WCPFC (for data not collected under the ROP). This proforma will ensure that records are maintained on how size data is collected by CCMs that provide these data, and if there are changes in the way it is collected over time.

[1] See paragraph 119 of SC14 Summary Report.

❖ *Project 127a represents an extension and enhancement of Project 127, addressing key gaps identified in SC21-ST-WP-02 and subsequent discussions, with additional resources to advance priorities identified in the project extension. Building on the initial consolidation and review of size composition data sources and conversion factors, the project focuses on issues related to uneven spatial and fleet sampling coverage, data representativeness, and uncertainty in conversion factors. Consistent with ISG-05 recommendations[2], Project 127a will undertake detailed statistical and spatial analyses of size composition data collection patterns, with a focus on yellowfin and bigeye tuna, to identify over- and under-sampling and provide practical recommendations to improve future sampling design. In parallel, it will strengthen conversion factor reliability by targeting poorly documented length-length and weight-weight relationships through new sampling efforts, including support to SOCCSKSARGEN[3] and observer programs.*

### 3.1.3 Improved coverage of cannery receipt data (Project 114)

SC22 will review progress under Project 114 on improving cannery receipt data. The review will cover efforts to expand data coverage through collaboration with CCMs and processor companies, and any updates on a dedicated workshop that SC21 requested of the SSP.

SC22 will further consider updated analyses demonstrating the value of cannery data as an independent source to improve purse seine species composition estimates. This includes consideration of the limitations of observer data, which currently sample less than 0.2% of catch, and the growing coverage of cannery data, which represent approximately half of total catches.

### 3.1.4 Scientific data (SciData) submission standardisation and data management improvements

The SSP will present its planned data management improvements, including the development of a web-based data submission portal, enhanced data quality control mechanisms, and improved access to data and data summaries. SC22 will consider progress on the standardisation of Scientific Data (SciData) submissions in 2026.

❖ *At WCPFC22, the Commission agreed to implement standardized templates to support CCM's submission of scientific data to improve efficiency, consistency, and data quality. The templates were made available through each CCM's Annual Report Part 2 reporting link on their respective reporting dashboard on the secure side of the WCPFC website.*

### 3.1.5 Minimum data reporting requirements

SC22 will review any proposals to improve data reporting requirements.

**3.1.5.1** FAD data reporting (FAD logbook requirements and satellite buoy data transmission)

SC22 will review progress on the development and implementation of the FAD logbook data fields, including updates from the FADMO-IWG, and provide feedback to support their finalisation. SC22 will also consider ongoing work to harmonize reporting arrangements, reduce duplication, and explore options for direct transmission of satellite buoy data to the Secretariat and/or SSP. SC22 will further review proposed approaches and timelines, with a view to providing recommendations to the Commission for consideration at WCPFC23.

[2] See Attachment H in SC21 Summary Report.

[3] SOCCSKSARGEN refers to a regional administrative area in the southern Philippines, officially designated as Region XII, comprising South Cotabato, Cotabato Province, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and General Santos City. The region is a major center for tuna fisheries and processing industries in the Philippines.

❖ *The Commission endorsed the proposed FAD logbook data fields under Annex II (WCPFC22-2025-10) as a basis for implementation, while noting the need for continued refinement of FAD design and material classifications. The Commission also tasked FADMO-IWG to further streamline reporting arrangements.*[4]

### 3.2 Evaluation of purse seine fishing activities

SC22 will review an analysis that evaluates purse seine fishing activities to better understand relationships between fishing behaviours and strategies, reporting requirements, and estimations of purse seine fishing effort.

SC22 will review a preliminary analysis aimed at comparing logbook positions with VMS in an effort to assess potential biases due to reporting precision and proposed approaches to address the issue, as appropriate.

### 3.3 Regional Observer Programme

SC22 will review the outputs of the ROP-IWG, including shark species identification and reporting, with a focus on identifying practical enhancements to improve the accuracy and consistency of observer data. The ROP-IWG Chair may also raise several science-related issues for SC22's awareness, including the observer data flow to SPC, ongoing revisions to minimum standard data fields, and gaps in non-catch transfer data.

❖ *The ROP-IWG met twice in the first half of 2026. Further work is anticipated on gaps in transhipment data, and the need for improved species identification and data standardisation across observer and electronic monitoring systems.*

### 3.4 Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring

SC22 will review a preliminary exploration into EM data submitted for the 2025 fishing year to evaluate how these data could satisfy the monitoring requirements for longline vessels, as compared to human observers, and to identify any potential gaps or challenges associated. This case study is intended to support the Commission discussion on the implementation of EM to meet longline coverage requirements in the future.

SC22 will also have an opportunity to provide guidance to the ERandEM-IWG on the adequacy of proposed EM coverage levels for estimating bycatch and rare species interactions, the need for harmonised data standards between EM and ROP to maintain time series continuity, and the importance of robust data validation processes, including the role of secondary review and the emerging use of AI. SC22 may also consider issues related to data access, data retention policies, data reporting timelines, and an audit and assurance framework, all of which may affect the availability, quality, and comparability of datasets provided to SPC for scientific analyses.

❖ *The ERandEM-IWG met twice in the first half of 2026 (ERandEMIWG8 and ERandEMIWG9). The IWG8 discussions highlighted several science-relevant issues, including the need to ensure that EM-derived data are fit for scientific use, with clear definitions of annotated data and minimum data requirements aligned with stock assessment needs.*

### 3.5 Other ST Theme issues

SC22 may consider any other issues related to Data and Statistics.

[4] See paras. 280–281, WCPFC22 Summary Report.

## AGENDA ITEM 4 STOCK ASSESSMENT THEME

### 4.1 Improvement of stock assessment software

#### 4.1.1 Update of the MULTIFAN-CL software

SC22 will note ongoing improvements and the need for continued maintenance and updating of the MULTIFAN-CL software. The Committee will briefly review these updates and provide comments or recommendations as appropriate.

#### 4.1.2 Scoping the next generation of stock assessment software (Project 123)

SC22 will review progress under Project 123, including the initial design of new assessment software, the development of spatio-temporal tagging approaches, and the specification of a broader implementation project. SC22 will also review proposed directions for future software development, including design requirements, analytical capabilities, and collaboration frameworks. Based on these discussions, SC22 will provide feedback and recommendations to guide the next phase of work.

- *Project 123 is a three-year scoping initiative to evaluate pathways for transitioning WCPFC tuna stock assessments from MULTIFAN-CL to next-generation software platforms, in response to evolving technical requirements and the anticipated limits of further MFCL development. The project examines the required features and capabilities for future assessments, evaluates existing and emerging software options, and advances collaborative development with partners such as IATTC and the Technical University of Denmark, including work on new model design concepts and external analyses of tagging data.*

### 4.2 Tagging data and research for stock assessment

FAC19 discussions in Manila, Philippines, highlighted the P42 budget line as a significant component of the Scientific Research budget and noted the need to clearly articulate the value and outcomes of tagging activities. In this context, SC22 will review the scientific contributions of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Project to stock assessments, ecosystem and modelling work, and other scientific outputs, and discuss its role in supporting the advice of the Scientific Committee to inform consideration of related matters in wider WCPFC processes, including FAC20.

- *Tagging data collected through the Pacific Tuna Tagging Project provide critical information on movement, population dynamics, and spatial processes that underpin tuna stock assessments in the WCPO. These data also support the parameterisation of SEAPODYM and contribute more broadly to the scientific analyses and advice developed by the Scientific Committee.*

### 4.3 WCPO Tunas

#### 4.3.1 WCPO yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*)

**4.3.1.1** Research and information

*Review of the 2026 yellowfin tuna stock assessment*

SC22 will review the results of the 2026 yellowfin tuna stock assessment, including data inputs, CPUE analysis, stepwise (bridging) analyses, and methodology, and will consider new findings, suggestions, and future research needs, including budget implications, to provide management recommendations to the Commission.

- *The last yellowfin tuna stock assessment was conducted in 2023 and reviewed at SC19. The 2023 yellowfin tuna stock assessment concluded that the stock is not experiencing overfishing (100% probability $F_{recent}<F_{MSY}$) and is not in an overfished condition (0% probability $SB_{recent}/SB_{F=0}<LRP$). SC19*

*identified priority areas for the next assessment, including improving CPUE standardisation through clearer representation of model effects and inclusion of key covariates affecting catchability, such as hooks, vessel characteristics, and fishing practices, as well as explicit consideration of effort creep and temporal changes in catchability. Further work was also requested to better evaluate environmental and region-specific covariates and their influence on both abundance and catchability.*

*SC19 called for the development of alternative CPUE series under different model assumptions to better represent uncertainty and to examine implications for regional scaling, alongside evaluation of alternative spatial structures, including single-region areas-as-fleets or equatorial-focused models. Strengthened characterisation of uncertainty was also requested through expanded sensitivity analyses, refinement of uncertainty grids, and assessment of parameter sensitivity to initial conditions.*

*Further work was requested on key biological processes, including natural mortality and growth, and on resolving conflicts in size and weight composition data. SC19 also emphasised improved use of tagging data, including alternative modelling approaches and stand-alone (external) tag-based models, and highlighted the need for improved catch estimates and biological sampling, particularly for Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. In addition, SC19 encouraged simplification of model structure, improved model stability and convergence, exploration of alternative assessment platforms, clearer reporting of model assumptions, and provision of stochastic projections to support a more robust and transparent assessment.*

**4.3.1.2** Provision of scientific information to the Commission

SC22 will provide recommendations for the following:

a. Stock assessment and trends
b. Stock status
c. Management advice

### 4.3.2 WCPO bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*)

**4.3.2.1** Research and information

*Review of the 2026 bigeye tuna stock assessment*

SC22 will review the results of the 2026 bigeye tuna stock assessment, consider new findings, suggestions, and future research needs, including budget implications, and provide management recommendations to the Commission.

- *The last stock assessment for bigeye tuna was conducted in 2023 and reviewed at SC19. The 2023 bigeye tuna stock assessment concluded that the stock is very likely not experiencing overfishing (100% probability $F_{recent}<F_{MSY}$) and is not in an overfished condition (0% probability $SB_{recent}/SB_{F=0}<LRP$). To support further development and improvement of the WCPO bigeye tuna stock assessment, SC19 in 2023 identified key priority areas, including strengthening research and data inputs through improved biological sampling, particularly age composition, expanded tagging programs, and review of size composition data; advancing model development through refinement of CPUE indices, consideration of effort creep, improved estimation of growth and mortality, and evaluation of spatial structure; and improving uncertainty analysis through targeted sensitivity testing of key assumptions, including tagging processes and data weighting, and addressing inconsistencies among data sources. SC19 also highlighted the importance of enhanced tagging diagnostics and supporting analyses.*

  *Building on these areas, SC21 identified additional issues directly relevant to the next assessment. Indicator analyses presented to SC21 showed a sustained decline in mean weight across fisheries, linked to increased catches of small fish, which affects key model inputs and has contributed to higher*

*estimated fishing mortality relative to FMSY. SC21, therefore, recommended a detailed analysis of mean weight trends by space, time, and fleet to inform model assumptions. SC21 also highlighted the need to resolve key data uncertainties, including issues related to small bigeye classification, and supported continued improvements in biological sampling, size data reconciliation, and conversion factors, as well as ongoing refinement of model assumptions and uncertainty related to growth, mortality, movement, and CPUE, to improve the robustness of the 2026 stock assessment.*

**4.3.2.2** Provision of scientific information to the Commission

SC22 will provide recommendations for the following:

a. Stock assessment and trends
b. Stock status
c. Management advice

### 4.3.3 Fisheries indicators for target tuna stocks

SC22 will review indicators for stocks without new stock assessments, to monitor recent changes in fisheries and to provide supporting context for ongoing conservation and management. The review will help identify emerging trends, highlight data gaps, and inform priorities for future research and assessment work. SC22 will also review the indicator analyses and provide comments and questions to guide further improvements.

- *An indicator paper provides empirical information on recent fishery patterns for key target tuna species, skipjack, bigeye, yellowfin, and South Pacific albacore, in years when no stock assessment is conducted. It compiles indicators such as total catch by gear, nominal CPUE trends (noting the limitation of nominal CPUE for representing abundance trends), spatial distribution of catch and effort, and size composition to describe recent developments in the fisheries. It also includes short-term projections, which are considered the most informative component for near-term stock outlooks. These indicators track trends over time but do not estimate the most current stock status.*

## 4.4 Northern stocks

Annex I of the Commission's Rules of Procedure defines 'Northern stocks' to be 'stocks which occur mostly in the area north of 20° north parallel'. Stocks designated by the Commission as Northern stocks are 'northern Pacific bluefin[5], northern albacore[6] and the northern stock of swordfish[7]'.

### 4.4.1 Provision of scientific information from the ISC[8]

Pursuant to the MOU between WCPFC and ISC, the ISC Chair, or designated representative, will be invited to brief SC22 on ISC activities since SC21, including stock status and conservation information for stocks under ISC purview, as well as future research plans.

### 4.4.2 North Pacific albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*)

**4.4.2.1** Research and information

North Pacific albacore stock assessment

SC22 will review the results of the 2026 North Pacific albacore stock assessment and provide comments

[5] Pacific bluefin tuna
[6] North Pacific albacore
[7] North Pacific swordfish
[8] International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean

and recommendations to the Commission, as required.

❖ *The last North Pacific albacore tuna stock assessment was conducted in 2023. The 2023 North Pacific albacore stock assessment concluded that the stock is not overfished and is not experiencing overfishing relative to agreed reference points, with current fishing intensity below target levels. Projections indicate a high probability, around 98 percent, that spawning biomass will remain above the limit reference point over the next decade under recent or historical fishing levels, meaning management objectives are likely to be met.*

**4.4.2.2** Provision of scientific information to the Commission

SC22 will provide recommendations for the following:

a. Stock assessment and trends
b. Stock status
c. Management advice

### 4.4.3 Pacific bluefin tuna (*Thunnus orientalis*)

**4.4.3.1** Research on migratory patterns

SC22 will review the results of research requested by the Commission at WCPFC21 on the migratory patterns of Pacific bluefin tuna (para. 178, WCPFC21 Summary Report). Further information is contained in a paper submitted by the ISC to NC21 on stock structure and distribution of Pacific bluefin tuna (NC21-WP-08).

**4.4.3.2** Pacific bluefin tuna stock assessment peer review

SC22 will review the results of the peer review of the Pacific bluefin tuna stock assessment undertaken by an independent panel of experts not involved in the initial stock assessment. The review was undertaken between 20-23 March 2026, with results reported to ISC26.

## 4.5 Billfish

### 4.5.1 Pacific blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*)

**4.5.1.1** Pacific blue marlin stock assessment

SC22 will review the results of the 2026 benchmark stock assessment undertaken by the ISC and provide updated stock status and management advice to the Commission.

❖ *The last assessment was conducted by the ISC in 2021 and reviewed at SC17. ISC concluded that Pacific blue marlin spawning biomass is above $SB_{MSY}$ and fishing mortality is below $F_{MSY}$, indicating that the stock is likely not overfished and overfishing is very unlikely, although some uncertainty remains. SC17 supported this view but noted that the stock status depends on model assumptions, particularly CPUE index selection, and highlighted uncertainties in data inputs and model structure that should be addressed in future assessments.*

**4.5.1.2** Provision of scientific information to the Commission

SC22 will make recommendations for the following:

a. Stock assessment and trends
b. Stock status
c. Management advice

### 4.6 Projects and Requests

#### 4.6.1 Framework for the independent review of WCPFC stock assessments

SC22 will discuss the *Process for the Independent Review of Stock Assessments* [9] and consider improvements to the framework, including establishing a forward schedule, prioritization criteria, alignment with the assessment workplan, and clarification of scope and terms of reference, to ensure that independent peer review becomes a routine and effective component of WCPFC stock assessment practice.

- *SC12 adopted a formal Process for the Independent Review of Stock Assessments, including recommending a multi-year review schedule, Commission approval, selection of a review panel, and panel's review process. SC21 highlighted that this agreed process has not been systematically applied, and identified practical gaps such as limited review time, lack of a strategic and prioritized schedule, resource constraints, and differing views among CCMs on timing and necessity of reviews, despite broad recognition of the importance of periodic independent review for credibility, ongoing improvements, and quality assurance.*

#### 4.6.2 Application of Close-Kin-Mark-Recapture methods (Project 100d)

SC22 will review the progress of work under Project 100d, focusing on progress in large-scale sample collection and genotyping, feasibility of integrating Close-Kin-Mark-Recapture (CKMR) outputs into assessment models, and the strategic value of CKMR in reducing key uncertainties, alongside consideration of logistical requirements, timelines, and resource implications for scaling this method within the WCPFC scientific work programme.

- *The project extends earlier work by applying CKMR methods to South Pacific albacore (Project 100c) and seeks to deliver CKMR-based estimates of key demographic parameters such as absolute adult abundance, mortality, and connectivity, for incorporation into the 2027 stock assessment. The project will also evaluate the broader applicability of CKMR approaches across WCPFC-managed tuna, billfish, and shark stocks, and develop a cost-benefit and prioritisation framework to guide future investment in and application of CKMR methods across species.*

#### 4.6.3 Updated reproductive biology of tropical tunas (Project 120)

SC22 will review the final project report and consider for further activities, as necessary. See https://meetings.wcpfc.int/node/23099

- *Estimating spawning potential remains a key challenge for WCPFC tropical tuna assessments due to the limited availability of biological data, especially for bigeye and skipjack tuna. SC19 supported an EU-funded study initially on yellowfin, later expanded to bigeye and skipjack tuna, with WCPFC20 approving USD 44,000 co-funding toward the EUR 200,000 project starting in January 2024 and concluding with a final report in August 2026.*

#### 4.6.4 Global tuna RFMO technical workshop on longline CPUE analysis to support best available science (Project 122a)

SC22 will consider updates to Project 122a, which supports a global Joint Tuna RFMO Longline CPUE Technical Workshop to be held from 12–16 October 2026 in Yokohama, Japan. The workshop will bring together analysts, data experts, and invited specialists from across the tuna RFMOs to review current longline CPUE standardisation approaches, emerging analytical methods, operational and fishery-specific

[9] See Attachment K, SC12 Summary Report.

factors affecting CPUE interpretation, and the use of CPUE indices in stock assessments and management strategy evaluation.

- *The workshop aims to undertake a comprehensive review of existing practices, identify technical challenges and data issues, develop practical technical guidelines and good-practice recommendations, and improve the consistency and robustness of longline abundance indices used in assessments of major tuna and tuna-like species. Expected outputs include a synthesis of current RFMO approaches, technical peer-reviewed papers addressing key methodological issues, recommendations for improving longline CPUE standardisation, and mechanisms for ongoing collaboration and knowledge sharing among RFMO scientists and CPUE analysts.*

### 4.6.5 Biology from billfish in longline fisheries (Project 125)

SC22 will review progress on Project 125, including developments in sampling design, coverage across species, sizes, sexes, and regions, and readiness for biological data collection and analysis, taking into account linkages with Project 118 and broader sampling plan development, with annual updates through 2027 and a final report expected in 2028.

- *This four-year project (2025–2028) aims to improve biological information for striped marlin, blue marlin, black marlin, shortbill spearfish, and sailfish in the WCPO through the collection and analysis of biological samples from longline fisheries. Samples, including fin spines, otoliths, maturity data, and length measurements, will be used to estimate age, growth, maturity, and reproductive parameters, improve length-weight and length-length conversion factors, and support estimates of stock productivity and future stock assessments. Sampling is intended to be spatially and temporally stratified across the WCPO and representative of sex and size classes for each species. Activity since project formalisation in March 2025 has focused on preparatory work, including the development of training materials, pending guidance from Project 118. SC21 agreed that the development of structured biological sampling plans for billfish and sharks is important to improving stock assessments and scientific advice and supported further work on proportional sampling approaches to improve the representativeness of biological data collection.*

### 4.6.6 Developing a sampling strategy for sharks (Project 117, 118 and 126)

SC22 will review progress on Project 126 and consider the proposed sampling framework, including gap analysis results, design specifications, and implementation considerations, as well as how the sampling strategy can be applied through national and regional observer programs to support improved biological data collection and future shark stock assessments.

- *Biological data are essential for both integrated and data-limited stock assessments, yet existing shark biological samples in the WCPO are limited and lack adequate spatial and temporal representation, which constrains their ability to reflect population structure. Project 126 aims to address these gaps by developing a statistically robust and spatially and temporally structured sampling strategy for shark species, building on approaches such as the ISC International Billfish Biological Sampling program to support the estimation of key biological parameters, including growth and maturity, and to better understand spatial variability. The project includes evaluation of existing samples in the SPC Tissue Bank, identification of sampling gaps across regions, time periods, size classes, and sexes, and testing of sampling design robustness under practical constraints using simulation frameworks. SC21 supported a no-cost extension of the project to allow further development of the sampling plan, informed by guidance from related sampling plan projects (Projects 117: WCPFC tuna biological sampling plan and Project 118: WCPFC billfish biological sampling), and noted that this work is necessary to improve the quality of stock assessments and scientific advice.*

### 4.6.7 Age-length data stream for tuna assessments (Project 129)

SC22 will review the outcomes of initial activities under Project 129, including progress on rapid ageing research and evaluation of sampling capacity and feasibility, and guide the next phase of the project, including the potential to scale up sampling efforts to support more robust and reliable stock assessments.

- *The four-year Project 129, which commenced in 2026, aims to address a key limitation in tuna stock assessments by developing a sustained age-length data stream, given that current assessments rely heavily on size data and static growth assumptions due to limited historical otolith collections and the absence of systematic sampling, resulting in uncertainty and potential bias in estimating age structure and management quantities. The project seeks to increase the use of paired age-length data within assessment models to improve growth estimation and better capture spatial and temporal variability. In 2026, the project focuses on advancing rapid ageing methods using otolith morphometrics for yellowfin and bigeye tuna, and assessing the feasibility and requirements for implementing a structured age-length sampling program at a meaningful scale through engagement with CCMs, distant water fishing nations, and observer programs. These activities will inform whether sufficient support exists to progress to large-scale implementation.*

### 4.6.8 Joint bycatch assessment workshop for billfish and sharks (Project 130)

SC22 will review the progress towards convening the workshop under Project 130, including its scope and proposed timing and location. It was not possible to convene the workshop prior to SC22.

- *Project 130 responds to the need identified by the Billfish Research Plan and Shark Research Plan to improve and standardise stock assessment approaches for bycatch species, particularly billfish and sharks, where assessments are often constrained by limited data and inconsistent methodologies. The project includes the convening of a joint, pan-Pacific expert workshop, including participation from other organizations such as IATTC and ISC, to review existing assessment approaches across a range of data availability contexts, evaluate successful and unsuccessful applications, and consider alternative methods, including multi-model and Bayesian approaches, as well as tiered frameworks for low-information stocks and associated fishery characterisation. The workshop following SC22 will identify best practices, recommend appropriate assessment frameworks, and provide reference points, stock status reporting, and potential alignment of assessment schedules across regions.*

### 4.6.9 Research Plan Update

SC22 will review the progress of various research plans and provide recommendations for any plan updates.

**4.6.9.1** Tuna Assessment Research Plan (TARP) for 'Key' Tuna Species Assessments in the WCPO, 2026-2029

SC22 will review the updated TARP for 2026-2029 and provide comments and advice for practical implementation of the research plan.

**4.6.9.2** Billfish Research Plan (2023 – 2030) annual update

SC22 will review the progress of the Billfish Research Plan with annual updates.

**4.6.9.3** Shark Research Plan 2021-2030 annual updates

SC22 will review the progress of the Shark Research Plan 2021-2030 with annual updates.

### 4.7 Application of Convention language to stock assessment advice

The Commission requested SC22 to consider whether and how stock assessment advice for retained-catch stocks could explicitly address sustainability using Convention terminology (paragraph 261(b) of WCPFC22 Summary Report). SC22 will examine the feasibility of aligning existing quantitative stock assessment outputs, such as $SB/SB_{MSY}$ and $F/F_{MSY}$, with Convention terminology and develop guidance on how these outputs can be consistently interpreted and communicated in relation to overfished status, overfishing, and sustainable use, without altering the underlying scientific basis.

### 4.8 Other SA Theme issues

SC22 may consider any other issues relating to Stock Assessment.

## AGENDA ITEM 5 MANAGEMENT ISSUES THEME

### 5.1 Development of the WCPFC harvest strategy framework

SC22 will note the following key updates to the *Indicative Workplan for the Adoption of Harvest Strategies under CMM-2022-03* adopted by the Commission at WCPFC22[10]:

a. Bigeye tuna: Develop management procedures and management strategy evaluation; SC agree the operating models for MSE; SC endorses the estimation method; SC provide advice on performance of candidate management procedures; SC provides advice on the monitoring strategy; TCC consider the implications of candidate management procedures; the Commission consider and refine a candidate set of management procedures; Commission agree a TRP for bigeye; and the Commission ADOPT a management procedure.

b. Yellowfin tuna: Develop management procedures and management strategy evaluation; SC agree the operating models for MSE; SC provide advice on outcomes under the mixed fishery approach; Commission considers outcomes under the mixed fishery approach; SC provides advice on monitoring strategy; Commission agree a TRP for yellowfin; and the Commission adopts the mixed fishery management approach for YFT.

c. South Pacific albacore: Run management procedure for the first time; SC provides advice on the monitoring strategy; Commission reviews and adopts the monitoring strategy; and the Commission adopts implementing arrangements for the management procedure.

#### 5.1.1 Bigeye tuna harvest strategy

**5.1.1.1** Bigeye operating models

SC22 will assess whether an expanded OM grid sufficiently captures plausible states of nature for robust MSE testing, including the treatment of key uncertainties, overlap-area assumptions, fisheries outside MP control, and consistency with the updated 2026 stock assessment framework, and determine readiness for formal adoption of the bigeye tuna OM framework.

❖ *SC21 reviewed and supported an initial reference set of 24 bigeye tuna operating models developed under SC21-MI-WP-05 and noted that the OM grid captures key uncertainties such as recruitment variability, steepness, tag mixing, and effort creep, providing a suitable basis for initial testing. However, SC21 noted that the OM grid produces a relatively narrow range of outcomes, particularly for historical depletion, with much of the uncertainty driven by recruitment assumptions, indicating that the full range of plausible stock dynamics may not be adequately represented. SC21 therefore recommended further refinement and expansion of the OM reference set before formal adoption,*

[10] See Attachment 24, WCPFC22 Summary Report.

*including incorporation of additional high-priority uncertainties such as growth, natural mortality, movement dynamics, spatial structure, and potential CPUE hyperstability, as well as broader uncertainties related to domestic and archipelagic fisheries and climate change.*

*Consistent with WCPFC22 guidance and outcomes from BMW01, further OM development should also consider the treatment of uncertainties in archipelagic fisheries, fisheries outside MP control, overlap-area implementation issues, and alternative assumptions for fisheries not directly controlled by the BET MP through structured sensitivity analyses, while maintaining a tractable OM grid. BMW01 further agreed that assumptions for fisheries outside MP control should generally use fixed recent catch or effort levels depending on the spatial option evaluated*.

**5.1.1.2** Bigeye estimation method

SC22 will review the proposed estimation method for bigeye tuna, including its structure, assumptions, and performance within the MSE framework, and assess its ability to provide robust and reliable estimates of stock status under key uncertainties represented within the operating model framework. Consistent with BMW01 outcomes, SC22 will also consider the suitability of the proposed EM for application across the alternative spatial configurations and mixed-fishery evaluation framework being developed for the BET MP. SC22 will provide guidance on the suitability of the proposed EM and any required refinements before its application in testing candidate MPs and supporting future MP adoption by the Commission.

❖ *A robust and computationally efficient estimation method (EM) is required to generate reliable stock status signals for management procedures. SC21 reviewed developments in a candidate bigeye estimation method and identified several areas requiring further investigation, including the generation of CPUE indices and the specification of priors for certain estimated productivity parameters.*

**5.1.1.3** Bigeye management procedure – design and implementation considerations

SC22 will evaluate three spatial options for the bigeye MP forwarded by BMW01 for further consideration:

- 20°N–10°S tropical longline;
- Convention Area-wide longline catch limit; and
- 20°N–10°S tropical longline excluding the Hawaii longline fishery.

SC22 discussions will also focus on resolving key design and implementation elements, including:

- selection among the agreed spatial options;
- fisheries and fleets to be covered;
- interpretation and application of candidate TRPs;
- HCR structure and mixed-fishery burden sharing;
- treatment of fisheries outside MP control and overlap-area implementation;
- practical implementation of MP outputs within existing CMMs and the Tropical Tuna Measure framework; and
- evaluation of candidate MPs and associated performance trade-offs.

❖ *The development of the bigeye tuna Management Procedure (MP) is at a critical design stage, with adoption targeted at WCPFC23 in December 2026 under WCPFC22 guidance.*

*BMW01 agreed that the overlap area should be treated as an implementation adjustment rather than as a direct MP output, and that fisheries managed through the BET MP would depend on the selected spatial range. BMW01 also agreed that SPC should proceed with further evaluation of the three WCPFC21 candidate TRPs using a 50% probability formulation, and that the BET MP should use a three-year management period with a two-year data lag.*

*BMW01 agreed that SPC should evaluate a Hillary Step-style HCR for the BET MP and proceed using longline catch limits as the longline output control and purse seine FAD closure periods as the purse seine output control. BMW01 noted that the longline output should be expressed as catch, particularly where the MP spatial range covers the full Convention Area, while implementation arrangements may continue using effort-based approaches such as the VDS in some fisheries. BMW01 also requested SPC to evaluate a broader range of purse seine FAD closure/open period options beyond the current 0-3 month range and to further clarify how longline catch scalars translate into absolute catch limits under different parts of the HCR.*

**5.1.1.4** Bigeye management procedure – evaluations

SC22 will review results from initial MP evaluations across the spatial options, candidate TRPs, HCR structures, and mixed-fishery control arrangements, taking into account guidance from SC21 and the outcomes of BMW01. SC22 will review the evaluation results and provide technical advice to the Commission on the performance, trade-offs, and consistency of candidate management procedures with agreed management objectives and risk criteria, including identification of any candidate MPs that may not satisfy agreed risk thresholds such as the LRP risk threshold.

❖ *The evaluation of candidate bigeye tuna management procedures represents the transition from design to performance testing within the MSE framework, where alternative MPs are assessed against agreed performance indicators across the range of uncertainties represented in the operating model grid.*

*BMW01 agreed that SPC should use the following candidate performance indicators for BET MP evaluations:*

- *stock status in the WCPFC-CA (SB/SBF=0);*
- *proximity to the TRP;*
- *probability that SB/SBF=0 is below the LRP;*
- *expected BET catch;*
- *expected vulnerable biomass for LL fisheries;*
- *catch and effort variability;*
- *F relative to FMSY; and*
- *MSY.*

*Particular attention is expected on MP performance under key uncertainties, including recruitment variability, mixed fishery interactions, assumptions regarding fisheries outside MP control, overlap-area implementation issues, and sensitivity to design choices such as HCR structure, output controls, and treatment of FAD-related measures. Evaluations are also expected to examine trade-offs associated with alternative burden-sharing arrangements between tropical longline and purse seine fisheries, including stability, vulnerable biomass outcomes, catch variability, and risk performance across alternative management configurations.*

**5.1.1.5** Bigeye tuna management workshop

The second Bigeye Management Workshop (BMW02) is scheduled to be held in Honolulu, Hawaii, on 1–2 October 2026, hosted by the United States. SC22 will identify key outstanding issues for consideration at BMW02 to support the final consideration and potential adoption of the BET MP at WCPFC23.

### 5.1.2 Yellowfin tuna harvest strategy

**5.1.2.1** Yellowfin operating models

SC22 will consider the suitability and scope of the operating models and the robustness of underlying assumptions and parameterisation for representing yellowfin dynamics within the mixed fishery harvest strategy framework.

- *The development of yellowfin tuna operating models represents an initial step toward integrating yellowfin into the WCPFC harvest strategy framework, noting that, unlike skipjack, South Pacific albacore, and bigeye, yellowfin currently has no dedicated management procedure and is managed indirectly within a mixed fishery framework dominated by purse seine and longline fisheries. Previous analyses have shown that under the current framework, yellowfin stock outcomes emerge from the interaction of other species' MPs, particularly skipjack and bigeye, and existing management measures. The proposed operating models will therefore play a critical role in characterising key uncertainties, including fleet interactions, spatial structure, and the influence of fisheries outside direct control to evaluate the implications of the mixed fishery framework for yellowfin tuna.*

**5.1.2.2** Yellowfin outcome evaluations

SC22 will consider the extent to which yellowfin objectives can be achieved under the current framework, including the robustness of evaluation assumptions and baseline conditions, and the implications of fisheries outside management control. SC22 will also consider whether the results indicate structural limitations in the current framework and whether alternative approaches, including adjustments to existing measures or future MP development, may be required.

- *Evaluations will assess whether expected outcomes under the adopted MPs for other stocks can achieve yellowfin objectives within the mixed fishery harvest strategy framework, noting that current fishing levels are unlikely to meet agreed objectives within CMM 2025-02 and that inherent conflicts exist between species targets in mixed fisheries.*

### 5.1.3 South Pacific albacore harvest strategy

**5.1.3.1** South Pacific albacore management procedure – run

SC22 will review the results of the MP run, and consider any technical issues related to data inputs, estimation method performance, and implementation readiness, and provide advice to inform Commission consideration and implementation of the MP outputs.

- *Following the adoption of the SPA MP (CMM 2025-01) and the ongoing development of the implementing measure, the first run of the MP will produce total allowable catch limits for the WCPFC-CA south of 10°S for the upcoming three-year management cycle, based on updated data inputs and defined monitoring processes.*

**5.1.3.2** South Pacific albacore monitoring strategy

SC22 will review the draft SPA monitoring strategy, which provides the framework for monitoring the collection, provision, coverage, and quality of data necessary to run the MP and generate performance indicators against management objectives, consistent with Annex III of CMM 2025-01.

**5.1.3.3** Joint WCPFC/IATTC Working Group for South Pacific Albacore

SC22 will consider updates from the first meeting of the Joint WCPFC–IATTC Working Group on South Pacific albacore (SPAJWG01) and provide guidance on priority areas and identify any additional issues requiring further development in advance of the next SPAJWG meeting.

- *SPAJWG01 established a foundation for strengthened cooperation between the two Commissions on the management of this shared stock, including agreement on pragmatic working arrangements, the need to avoid duplication of existing processes, and the importance of clear reporting pathways and Secretariat coordination. The SPAJWG reviewed stock status and noted that South Pacific albacore is not overfished, while recognising key uncertainties related to spatial structure, movement, and data limitations, particularly in the EPO. It also highlighted that WCPFC and IATTC are at different stages of management development, with WCPFC having adopted a CMM for the SPA MP and IATTC progressing toward reference points and emphasised the need for compatible management approaches rather than identical measures. Priority issues identified included improving transparency and consistency in the overlap area, strengthening data exchange and harmonisation, enhancing scientific coordination for the 2027 pan-South Pacific stock assessment, and advancing work on compatible measures. For intersessional work, the Working Group agreed to develop a reference document on stock status and fisheries, progress shared data standards and analytical approaches, prepare a joint scientific research plan with indicative resource requirements, and further develop a framework for compatible measures, while continuing collaboration between SPC and IATTC scientists. The second meeting is expected to be held in early 2027.*

**5.1.3.4** Updates on SP Albacore Roadmap IWG

SC22 will review progress under the South Pacific Albacore Roadmap Intersessional Working Group (IWG), which has been tasked with advancing key components of the harvest strategy. Following endorsement of the 2023–2026 workplan and the adoption of the SPA MP at WCPFC22, the IWG's current focus is on operationalizing the MP, including the first MP run, development and review of the monitoring strategy, and progression of implementing arrangements and allocation considerations in advance of adoption of an implementing CMM at WCPFC23. SC22 will consider updates on these activities and provide technical advice relevant to monitoring strategy and implementation design, and guidance to support the completion of remaining roadmap elements and readiness for full implementation of the SPA MP from 2027.

### 5.1.4 Skipjack tuna harvest strategy

**5.1.4.1** Skipjack monitoring strategy

SC22 will review the outcomes of regional CPUE analyses combining purse seine and pole and line fisheries data as a potential approach to mitigating the impact of changing spatial coverage of key gears. SC22 will also review the latest update to the skipjack monitoring strategy and provide input as required.

- *The Commission emphasised that a robust monitoring strategy is essential to support effective implementation of the skipjack MP, particularly to ensure that data inputs remain reliable and that MP outputs are accurately tracked against actual fishery performance. Key issues include strengthening data inputs to the estimation method, addressing potential degradation in key datasets, such as reduced spatial coverage and representativeness of pole-and-line CPUE indices, changes in fleet behaviour affecting CPUE signals, and gaps or inconsistencies in catch and effort reporting, as well as identifying and closing data gaps and improving monitoring of catch and effort relative to MP limits. There is also a need to begin incorporating climate and ecosystem-related uncertainties into the monitoring framework.*

### 5.1.5 Mixed fishery monitoring strategy

SC22 will consider the scope and design of a mixed fishery monitoring framework, the adequacy of existing data systems to support cross-species evaluation, the identification of data gaps and capacity constraints.

- *The mixed fishery monitoring strategy reflects the need to extend monitoring beyond single species approaches to support the broader harvest strategy framework in which multiple species are managed through interacting species-specific management procedures. It was highlighted that stock outcomes for species such as yellowfin and bigeye are influenced by the combined effects of different MPs, fisheries interactions, and activities outside direct management control, and therefore require coordinated monitoring across fleets, regions, and species. Key issues include tracking catch and effort across all relevant fisheries, including those outside MP control, improving data consistency and comparability, monitoring effort redistribution and behavioural changes, and ensuring that assumptions used in MSE remain valid under real-world conditions.*

### 5.1.6 Progress of the WCPFC Harvest Strategy Work Plan

SC22 will review the progress of developing the harvest strategy framework along with the *Indicative Work Plan for the Adoption of Harvest Strategy Under CMM 2022-03* and provide advice to the Commission of further updates to the work plan as needed.

### 5.1.7 Pacific bluefin tuna – Long-term harvest strategy

SC22 will review ISC presentations on progress in developing the long-term harvest strategy, assess the scientific basis including MSE outcomes and proposed elements, and provide comments and advice to the Commission to support consideration and adoption of the harvest strategy.

- *The development of a long-term harvest strategy for Pacific bluefin tuna builds on progress made through the Joint IATTC–WCPFC NC Working Group (JWG), including JWG10 in 2025 and the intersessional JWGI03 meeting in March 2026, following completion of the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) and the stock's recovery to the second rebuilding target of 20% of unfished spawning biomass in 2021. While JWG10 reviewed MSE results and outlined key elements of a comprehensive harvest strategy, it did not reach consensus on harvest control rules and therefore initiated further intersessional work to refine options and advance agreement toward adoption. JWGI03 continued this process by narrowing candidate harvest control rules, discussing reference points and control rules, and developing a draft "Newport Beach Management Procedure," with the expectation that a fully specified long-term harvest strategy will be finalized in 2026 and implemented in 2027, replacing the current interim harvest strategy framework.*

### 5.1.8 Southwest Pacific swordfish management procedure

SC22 will review progress in implementing the workplan and provide advice to the Commission to support the continued development and eventual adoption of a harvest strategy for Southwest Pacific swordfish.

- *The development of a Southwest Pacific swordfish harvest strategy follows the Commission's request to establish a structured management strategy evaluation framework and a long-term management procedure, with SC21 endorsing a project scope and workplan led by Australia and the EU to guide this process. At WCPFC22, the Commission adopted an indicative multi-year workplan covering 2026 to 2030, which sets out a stepwise process to define objectives, reference points, and candidate management procedures, and to test these through MSE, with regular scientific input and decision points at both SC and Commission levels.*

### 5.2 Review of effectiveness of CMM 2025-02

SC22 will review technical evaluations presented in WCPFC22-2025-22 and any updated information on recent fishing patterns and implementation of CMM 2025-02 to determine whether the measure is likely to achieve its stated objectives for bigeye, yellowfin, and skipjack.

### 5.3 Other MI Theme issues

SC22 may consider any other issues that are not covered under the Management Issues Theme agenda items.

## AGENDA ITEM 6 ECOSYSTEM AND BYCATCH MITIGATION THEME

### 6.1 Ecosystem and Climate Indicators

#### 6.1.1 Progress of Project 121 (Ecosystem and Climate Indicators)

SC22 will review progress under Project 121 toward refinement, testing, and potential adoption of candidate indicators, including responses to SC21 and Commission requests, updates to the Report Card, and any new or revised indicators and methodological developments. This will include consideration of SC21's recommendation that the SSP investigate inclusion of estimated median phytoplankton size derived from satellite SST and chlorophyll-a data. SC22 will also review outcomes from the March 2026 workshops on ecosystem and climate indicators, which are intended to advance indicator development, testing, and application, and consider their implications for future indicator development and integration into WCPFC processes.

- *Project 121 is a five-year project, scheduled to conclude in 2027, to establish a structured framework grouping indicators into climatological, oceanographic, and fishery-related categories, with several indicators already tested against agreed selection criteria. The Commission agreed to continue integrating climate considerations into scientific and management work through a pragmatic and phased approach consistent with current data and resource constraints.*

#### 6.1.2 Development of early warning tools and expanded climate impact assessments

SC22 will review progress on the development of early warning tools to anticipate climate-driven changes, including data inputs, methodological approaches, and resource requirements, requested by the Commission at WCPFC22. The Commission also requested that future assessments of climate impacts on tuna resources explicitly include the geographic regions of Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. SC22 will consider how these regions are incorporated into ongoing and planned analyses, and how this work supports the broader phased approach to integrating climate risks into WCPFC scientific and management processes.

#### 6.1.3 Climate Change Workplan

SC22 will review the general progress of tasks assigned to the Scientific Committee in the Climate Change Workplan and provide advice or recommendations to the Commission, as needed.

- *WCPFC21 adopted the WCPFC Climate Change Workplan for 2024 – 2027 (Attachment 13, WCPFC21 Summary Report). WCPFC22 noted that the CCVA consultancy had met its terms of reference and provided a sound conceptual framework, while recognising that full implementation would require substantial additional data and resources. The Commission further agreed that climate considerations should be progressively integrated into existing SC, TCC, and Secretariat processes, using both quantitative and qualitative methods (para. 352, WCPFC22 Summary Report).*

### 6.2 Updates on the 2019 SEAPODYM Review

SC22 will review SEAPODYM activities since its 2019 review to assess progress in addressing SC21 and 2019 review recommendations, evaluate the robustness and transparency of the modelling framework, and provide guidance on remaining gaps, priority areas for further work, and the appropriate role of SEAPODYM within WCPFC scientific processes, including its use in stock assessment and scientific advice.

- *Updates on progress since the 2019 SEAPODYM Review will be presented through two papers covering methodological developments and applications to Pacific tuna species. The work will focus on actions taken in response to key recommendations from the 2019 review and SC21, including further validation of SEAPODYM through comparisons with alternative modelling approaches and, where relevant, testing with simulated data. The methodological paper is expected to report on improvements in model structure, estimation procedures, and diagnostics, including convergence diagnostics, sensitivity analyses for key parameters and assumptions, likelihood profiles, and evaluation of model behaviour under different data inputs and optimisation periods. It will also address the characterisation of uncertainty in model estimates. The applications paper is expected to demonstrate how SEAPODYM performs when applied to Pacific tuna stocks, including evaluation of population dynamics, spatial structure, and variability, and how model outputs compare with other assessment approaches.*

### 6.3 FAD impacts

#### 6.3.1 Research on non-entangling and biodegradable FADs

SC22 will review progress on Projects 110 and 110a, focused on non-entangling and biodegradable Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) in the WCPO (EU-, US-, and ISSF-funded, with Project 110 completed in December 2025). SC22 is invited to consider SC21 recommendations for additional work on defining biodegradable materials and establishing standards for the marine environment. The SSP will prepare terms of reference (TORs) for projects addressing biodegradable materials for both drifting and anchored FADs, and SC22 will provide guidance to support further work in line with these TORs (para. 686 – 687, SC21 Summary Report).

#### 6.3.2 Research on dFAD loss and abandonment

SC22 will review progress on understanding and mitigating drifting FAD (dFAD) loss and abandonment, noting SC21 concerns about high stranding events in PICT waters, including FADs deployed in the EPO. SC22 will consider SSP monitoring and pilot retrieval projects and discuss ways to track FADs that are no longer actively monitored by owners. SC22 is invited to note SC21 encouragement for CCMs and stakeholders to increase data collection on stranded FADs, improve identification rates, assess environmental impacts, continue economic and feasibility studies, and support development of recovery programs.

SC22 will also review ongoing stakeholder surveys, participation in the February 2026 international workshop in French Polynesia, and collection of in-situ stranded FAD data. SC22 is invited to guide further work to assess impacts on different habitats using tracking and historical data, and to note SC21's recognition of the need for continued SSP-led funding, work planning, and scientific support for the FADMO IWG (paras. 696 – 702, SC21 Summary Report).

#### 6.3.3 Updates on FAD Management Options IWG

SC22 will review the intersessional activities and progress of the FADMO-IWG work and provide feedback to facilitate the IWG's progress.

❖ *The Commission tasked the FADMO-IWG to continue work in 2026 on streamlining reporting arrangements and reducing duplication—including exploring options for direct transmission of satellite buoy data from the PNA to the Secretariat and/or the SSP—and to continue discussions on appropriate timeframes for event-based reporting, with clear options and recommendations to be provided to the Commission in 2026 (para. 281, WCPFC22 Summary Report).*

### 6.4 Bycatch management

#### 6.4.1 Bycatch Management Information System

SC22 will review any updates related to bycatch management, including the Bycatch Management Information System (BMIS), any feedback on the bycatch management site at http://www.wcpfc.int/bycatch-management or http://www.bmis-bycatch.org/, and the Bycatch Data Exchange Protocol (BDEP) within the BMIS.

#### 6.4.2 Review of CMM for seabirds (CMM 2025-05)

SC22 will review updated information relevant to CMM 2025-05 and provide advice on whether adjustments or additional measures are needed to improve effectiveness and ensure consistent application across the Convention Area.

❖ *Review of the seabird CMM reflects continued concern regarding seabird bycatch risks and the effectiveness of mitigation measures across different regions and fisheries. The newly adopted CMM 2025-05 strengthens requirements by mandating combinations of mitigation measures tailored to area-specific risk profiles and vessel characteristics, while also introducing annual reviews and a formal review within three years to assess effectiveness and remaining risks.*

#### 6.4.3 Review of CMM for Sea Turtles (CMM 2018-04)

SC22 will receive an update on the informal intersessional review of CMM 2018-04, including a draft revised CMM, and provide feedback for the Commission's consideration and possible adoption at WCPFC23.

❖ *WCPFC22 endorsed the establishment of an informal intersessional working group (led by the USA) to review CMM 2018-04 in 2026 and report to SC22, TCC22, and WCPFC23. The First Sea Turtle Informal Intersessional Working Group Meeting (STIIWG01) was convened virtually on 8 and 10 April 2026 to consider recent scientific information and potential options to improve the current CMM on sea turtles.*

### 6.5 Marine pollution

SC22 will consider updates on the intersessional review of CMM 2017-04 on marine pollution, including definitions, data and reporting implications, and environmental impacts.

❖ *WCPFC22 discussed the ongoing review of CMM 2017-04 on marine pollution, led by Canada through an intersessional process aimed at developing a revised CMM for adoption at WCPFC23, with outputs to be submitted to SC22 and TCC22. The discussions highlighted the need to expand the scope beyond existing provisions, including clearer definitions such as abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear (ALDFG), broader coverage of pollution sources like plastics, e-waste, emissions and noise, and stronger reporting requirements and data frameworks, while ensuring alignment with international instruments such as MARPOL[11] and avoiding unintended legal conflicts. The revision also introduces more detailed management elements, including reporting timelines, port reception facilities, and treatment of fishing gear and waste categories.*

[11] International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships

### 6.6 Deep-sea mining

SC22 will consider updates provided by the Secretariat on deep sea mining activities in the western and central Pacific Ocean. SC22 may also consider a role for EB or ecosystem-related workstreams in tracking and assessing potential risks to tuna fisheries from deep-sea mining, including identifying data needs, strengthening coordination with ISA and other relevant bodies, and considering whether future scientific advice and monitoring frameworks should incorporate these emerging pressures.

- *SC21 and WCPFC22 discussions indicate emerging concerns about the potential impacts of International Seabed Authority (ISA) deep-sea mining activities on tuna ecosystems and the broader marine environment, although this issue is still at an early stage within WCPFC processes. SC21 acknowledged that external pressures, including activities such as deep-sea mining, are becoming increasingly relevant to fisheries management and may affect ecosystem dynamics that underpin tuna stocks. This reflects a growing recognition that non-fishing impacts could influence stock productivity, habitat conditions, and ecosystem interactions. While no specific management actions were agreed upon, the issue highlights a gap in current scientific monitoring and assessment frameworks, which are not yet designed to evaluate such impacts. WCPFC participated in the ISA REMP workshop in Busan from 18 to 21 May 2026 and will report key outcomes to SC22, including identified management measures, knowledge gaps, and collaboration needs from the workshop process.*

### 6.7 Other EB Theme issues

SC22 may consider any other issues that are not covered under the EB Theme agenda items.

## AGENDA ITEM 7 OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS

### 7.1 Pacific Marine Specimen Bank (Project 35b)

SC22 will review the progress of Project 35b and the outcomes of the 8th Steering Committee meeting and provide recommendations to the Commission for the project's continuity.

#### 7.1.1 Updates on pollutant studies in WCPO tuna

This agenda item marks the first formal introduction of pollutant-related research within the Scientific Committee, positioned under the Pacific Marine Specimen Bank (PMSB) framework. It reflects the growing use of PMSB samples for food safety and ecosystem-related analyses, including studies on mercury, persistent organic pollutants, plastics, and stable isotopes, which are already emerging within ongoing and completed research projects linked to the PMSB. The inclusion of this item at SC22 follows SC21 endorsement to advance a dedicated Working Paper on isotope, mercury, and other pollutant studies, signaling a shift toward integrating contaminant monitoring into tuna research while remaining grounded in existing biological sampling infrastructure. This development expands the scientific scope of PMSB beyond traditional stock assessment inputs toward broader ecosystem and human health considerations, without yet being framed as a core Ecosystem and Bycatch (EB) theme activity. SC22 will provide comments and recommendations on the future placement and treatment of this agenda item.

### 7.2 Pacific Tuna Tagging Project (Project 42)

SC22 will review the progress of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Project (Project 42) and the results of its 18th PTTP Steering Committee Meeting. SC22 will provide recommendations to the Commission for the continuity of the project.

### 7.3 West Pacific East Asia Project

SC22 will note the progress of the WPEA-SPF project that began in 2024 and is scheduled to conclude in 2027. SC22 is encouraged to consider data collection improvements to date and future needs and support for continuation of this work beyond 2027.

### 7.4 Japan Trust Fund activities

SC22 will review the results of the 2026 JTF Steering Committee meeting and provide advice, as needed.

### 7.5 Other Projects

SC22 may consider any other projects funded through voluntary contributions of WCPFC CCMs.

## AGENDA ITEM 8 COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

SC22 will review WCPFC's recent engagement with regional and international bodies to support coordination, information exchange, and alignment of scientific and management efforts. This includes collaboration with other tuna RFMOs, intergovernmental organizations, and scientific partners on cross-cutting issues such as data sharing, ecosystem approaches, climate-related work, and emerging international policy developments.

## AGENDA ITEM 9 SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS OF DEVELOPING STATES AND PARTICIPATING TERRITORIES

SC22 will consider the special requirements of developing States, particularly small island developing States (SIDS) and Participating Territories as they relate to the work of the Scientific Committee. This may include reviewing workplan prioritization, improving timelines and accessibility of scientific materials, considering capacity impacts when developing advice, and providing input to the Article 30 review by identifying where SC processes may necessitate Commission support related to Article 30 and relevant CMMs.

SC21 highlighted practical barriers for SIDS and Participating Territory CCMs, such as increasing workload, compressed timelines, and increasing data obligations, all of which present challenges for small delegations with limited capacities.

## AGENDA ITEM 10 FUTURE WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET

### 10.1 Development of the 2027 work program and budget, and projection of the 2028-2029 provisional work program and indicative budget

SC22 will develop the 2027 SC work program and budget, as well as the provisional work program and indicative budget for 2028–2029, for the Commission's consideration and endorsement. All project proponents should submit proposals with detailed terms of reference, including objectives, rationale, assumptions, scope of work, data requirements, whether public or non-public, time frame, budget, and references, for SC review and prioritisation. Proponents should refer to the *Template for SC Project Proposals* in Attachment B of SC21-GN-WP-03, which is also available in the Key Documents Library on the WCPFC website.

SC22 will note a recommendation from the Finance and Administration Committee to the Commission (Para 71, FAC9 Summary Report) that "*WCPFC12 task SC with carefully considering proposed scientific projects in the context of the indicative budget agreed for the coming year.*"

## AGENDA ITEM 11 ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

### 11.1 Future operation of the Scientific Committee

SC22 will review the stock assessment workflow and identify efficiency improvements, consider options for prioritising its work programme, examine potential adjustments to the SciData submission deadline, and contribute to broader work on meeting timetable adjustments, in response to a tasking by the Commission at WCPFC22.

The SC Vice Chair was tasked to lead intersessional work in 2026 on prioritizing SC's work and SC22 will consider options to improve efficiency, prioritisation, and the overall effectiveness of its operations while maintaining the quality, transparency, and independence of scientific advice.

- *This agenda item builds on a range of operational and structural challenges identified at SC21 and further considered at WCPFC22, including delays and inconsistencies in data submission, lack of standardisation, and constraints in data availability affecting the timely delivery and review of stock assessments. Timing misalignment across data provision, assessment preparation, and SC meetings, together with increasing workload and capacity constraints on the SSP, has created sustained pressure on WCPFC's scientific processes and raised concerns about long-term sustainability.*

  *SC21 highlighted the need to improve the quality and clarity of scientific outputs, noting that the SC must provide clear, substantive, and actionable advice and recommendations to the Commission. It also emphasised the importance of strengthening collaboration, including through continued application of Open Science principles, while maintaining the independence and integrity of SSP advice. Challenges were also identified in managing the expanding scope of work, including obligations under CMMs and evolving roles of stock assessments under harvest strategies, as well as the lack of a structured prioritisation framework and clear guidance from the Commission.*

  *Structural issues in meeting organisation were noted, including limited opportunity for strategic discussion, with support for a default SC meeting duration of 8-days and proposals to extend or establish dedicated Heads of Delegation discussions to address workload and planning issues more effectively.*

### 11.2 Next meeting

Members are invited to recommend provisional meeting dates of 10 to 18 August 2027 and the venue of Pohnpei, FSM, for SC23 in 2027 and to propose the dates and venue for SC24 in 2028, taking into account SC21's recommendation that the Scientific Committee be held every other year at the location of the Commission Secretariat, beginning with SC23, unless otherwise agreed.

## AGENDA ITEM 12 OTHER MATTERS

SC22 will consider any other issues that are raised under Agenda Item 1.4.

## AGENDA ITEM 13 ADOPTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT OF THE TWENTY-SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

SC22 will adopt all recommendations of the Scientific Committee. The SC22 Summary Report will be adopted intersessionally following SC22. The Outcomes Document containing all agreed decision points will be posted on the SC22 website within seven working days.

## AGENDA ITEM 14 CLOSE OF THE MEETING

The Chair will formally close the meeting on Wednesday, 19 August 2026.