



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
FIFTH REGULAR SESSION**
Port Vila, Vanuatu
10-21 August 2009

Strategy for the Incorporation of the ISC data into WCPFC Data Holdings

WCPFC-SC5-2009/GN-IP-09

Date: 29 July 2009

Prepared by the Secretariat

1. Introduction

1. The 2008 *Independent Review of the Commission's Science Structure and Functions* undertaken by MRAG (UK) noted that the data used to undertake assessments by ISC working groups are not fully held by WCPFC or SPC-OFP, and recommended that the ISC database be accessible to the WCPFC, and be made available to the Scientific Committee for the purposes of reviewing ISC stock assessments, as needed (paragraph 20 of the Executive Summary, Independent Review Report). The report elaborated on this issue in paragraph 45 as:

“In order for external validation to be possible, and to improve the understanding of ISC analyses, copies of the data sets used by the ISC should be systematically made available to the Commission, and preferably incorporated in the Commission's data holdings.”

2. Following presentation of the Independent Review Report to the Fifth Regular Session of the Commission (WCPFC5) at Busan, Korea in December 2008, the Commission requested the Secretariat work with ISC, SPC-OFP and relevant CCMs to develop a strategy for the incorporation of ISC data into the Commission's data holdings (paragraph 64.b, WCPFC5 Summary Report). This document has been prepared to facilitate discussion associated with the Commission's request.

2. Issues and approaches proposed

3. For further consideration by the Scientific Committee and the ISC, this matter might proceed in several logical steps broadly outlined as:

- a. ISC formally advise the Scientific Committee of the protocols, procedures and standards for the provision of data to ISC;
- b. Both SC and ISC collaborate to reconcile current ISC protocols, procedures and standards against the Commission's "Scientific Data to be Provided to the Commission";
- c. Both SC and ISC prepare an inventory of data holdings;

- d. Both SC and ISC identify current gaps in ISC data holdings with respect to the Commission's "Scientific Data to be Provided to the Commission" and to suggest a strategy for addressing those gaps;
- e. ISC, the SC and the Secretariat work together to develop a work plan, protocols and procedures for the harmonization of the ISC's and Commission's data holdings; and
- f. Revise the MOU, as necessary, so that it includes harmonization of of ISC data and WCPFC data holdings.

3. ISC's response

4. This WCPFC Secretariat's proposal was sent to the 9th meeting of the ISC (15-20 July 2009) for its consideration. The Statistics Working Group of the ISC and the ISC Plenary considered this issue and noted in its adopted report as follows:

(Response from the Statistics WG, Agenda Item 9.1)

"A proposal by the WCPFC Secretariat to incorporate ISC data into WCPFC holdings was presented and discussed. The STATWG considered that there is no need for ISC data to be incorporated into WCPFC data holdings. This opinion was based on 1) WCPFC already holds most of the data held by ISC and 2) any remaining data may not be able to be provided due to ISC member's confidentiality rules and/or due to the data pertaining to areas outside the WCPFC Convention Area (i.e. the EPO)."

(Response from the ISC Plenary)

"In response to the WCPFC's request that ISC assist the Secretariat to develop a strategy for the incorporation of ISC data to WCPFC data holdings, ISC9 noted the findings of the STATWG summarized above under Agenda Item 9.1. It was considered that at the time of the request the WCPFC Secretariat may not have had a full understanding of the ISC operational practices with regard to data, but that this understanding had been improved through discussion between ISC and the WCPFC representative at ISC9.

ISC9 concluded that it would be inappropriate to proceed with development of the type of strategy requested by the WCPFC's proposal for several reasons. First, as stated by the STATWG, since most of the ISC members are also WCPFC members, it is expected that they already submit the relevant data to both organizations. Second, the release of data must comply with the ISC Operations Manual which states that Category I, II and III data shall only be made available to contributors and members of ISC Working Groups for use in the work of the Working Groups. Release of these data to other parties could be considered if presented in the form of a specific data request, but approval and conditions for release would have to be obtained from the contributors of the specific data to be released.

Rather than proceeding with a strategy for incorporation, ISC9 considers it would be more appropriate for ISC and WCPFC to exchange data inventories and identify data gaps as a first step. An inventory of data that have been collected by members and may be available for stock assessment will be finalized over the coming months.

A catalog of data held by ISC will be produced in the coming months with assistance from the DA. This can be shared with WCPFC as part of a process of periodic consultation to review overall consistency between datasets."

4. Discussion

5. The process for stock assessment in the WCPFC SC and ISC are not the same. In the majority of cases, WCPFC stock assessments are conducted by the SPC-OFP scientists operating under contract to the Commission based on the data and information provided to the Commission. ISC stock assessments are partially conducted by each member country of ISC. So all data sets for stock assessments are not available to the ISC working groups. The Scientific Committee is invited to further consider an appropriate response to the request from the Commission.