



NORTHERN COMMITTEE
Fifth Regular Session
Nagasaki, Japan
7-10 September 2009

SUMMARY OF ISSUES ARISING FROM INDEPENDENT REVIEW

WCPFC-NC5-2009/IP-05 (rev.1)

24th August 2009; revised on 2 September 2009

Introduction

1. The Inaugural Session of the Commission in December 2004 adopted the Final Report of Working Group II which was concerned with science structure and functions of the Commission. Among other matters, the Report recommended:

- a provisional science structure for the Commission for a transitional period (expected to last some 3 to 5 years and representing the period between the Convention coming into force and a fully functioning Commission);
- that, during this period, the structure and functions of the science secretariat be flexible and adaptable; and
- an independent review of the transitional structure and function be carried out two years after entry into force of the Convention, or earlier if required, to determine the effectiveness of the science structure and to recommend changes as appropriate.

2. Following development of the terms of reference for the Review by the Scientific Committee and approval of a supporting budget by the Commission, Marine Resources Assessment Group (UK) was contracted to undertake the Review. Field work and consultations, including at the annual sessions of the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC), the Scientific Committee and the Northern Committee, were held throughout 2008. An interim Report was presented to the Fifth Regular Session of the Commission at Busan in December 2008 and, on the basis of additional comments subsequently submitted to the consultants by CCMs, a Final Report was received in May 2009 (<http://www.wcpfc.int/doc/gn-wp-07/mrag-final-project-report-independent-review-commission%E2%80%99s-transitional-science-structur>).

3. This document (WCPFC-NC5-2009/WP02) summarizes key recommendations for discussion at NC5. Numbers refer to the Executive Summary paragraph number Attachment A. The agency tentatively identified may have a primary role in addressing the recommendation. A summary of outcomes resulting from consideration of the Independent Review recommendations at the Fifth Regular Session of the Scientific Committee, 10-21 August 2009, Port Vila, Vanuatu is appended at Attachment B. The agreed summary of outcomes in relation to i) the MoU between the Commission and the ISC, ii) peer review arrangements and iii) data harmonisation at SC5 are presented at Attachment C.

Advice and recommendations

4. The Fifth Regular Session of the Northern Committee is invited to:
 - a. Review the outcomes of SC5 in relation to the recommendations contained in the Final Report of the Independent Review;
 - b. Provide comments, advice and recommendation, as appropriate, to the ISC, SC and the Commission in relation to the recommendations contained in the Final Report of the Independent Review.

Summary of issues arising from Independent Review

I. DATA CUSTODIANSHIP

1) Data gaps

- a) Identify data gaps for scientific data with respect to operational, aggregate, size and tagging data (8, SPC)
- b) Approach to address such gaps
 - i) Continue outreach activities (9, Secretariat, ST-SWG)¹
 - ii) Develop and use of practical guidelines (9, SPC)
 - iii) Impose sanctions for non-compliance (10, TCC, Commission)

2) Data management and confidentiality

- a) Adopt Data Exchange Agreement between WCPFC and SPC² (14, SPC, Commission (*done at WCPFC5*))

3) Data custodianship service

- a) Strengthen confidence in data custodianship services as a means to address data submission shortfalls (16, AHTG[Data], SPC, Commission)
- b) Develop a three-year service agreement with SPC to secure resources (13, 17, SPC, SC, Commission)
- c) Commission takes additional steps to improve data reporting and supporting SPC (18, SPC, Secretariat)
- d) Incorporation of ISC data into the WCPFC holdings (20, 45, ISC, SPC, Secretariat)

II. SCIENCE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

4) Process of project contract

- a) Update guidelines (Attachment M of the SC4 Report) of processing SC work programme (24, 31, Secretariat, SC/RSC)
- b) Improve the level of advertising, funding and scope of candidate projects in an effort to attract increased responses to research opportunities (25, 26, 33, Secretariat, SC)

5) Quality of scientific advice available to the Commission

¹ Numbers refer to the Executive Summary paragraph number. The agency or body tentatively identified may have a primary role in addressing the recommendation.

² Adopted at WCPFC5

- a) Implement periodic external peer review process on all contracted assessments of the Commission, including reciprocal review with other tuna RFMOs (26, 30, 33, 53, IATTC, ISC, SC)
 - i) Include peer reviewer's participation in the stock assessment process as well as their review of the models and results (26, SPC, ISC, SC)
 - ii) Allow sufficient time for the SC to review the results of peer review prior to presentation to SC (26, SPC, ISC, SC)
- b) Develop a standard procedure for CCMs to undertake duplicate assessments (28, SPC, SA-SWG, SC)
- c) Maintain transparency by posting research inputs and outputs on website (30, Secretariat)
- d) Develop a strategy to maximise the use of science knowledge of the SPC-OFP and other existing or potential contractors in deciding science needs and priorities (31, SC/RSC, Secretariat)
- e) SPC to continue training of talented individuals from developing CCMs to enhance their full participation in the scientific activities of the Commission (38, 68, SPC, Secretariat)

6) International Scientific Committee (ISC)

- a) Amend MOU to allow for ISC work to be requested by the SC as well as the NC (40, 64, 67, Secretariat, ISC, SC, Commission)
- b) To support robust science within the ISC
 - i) Additional review by the SC and external peer review (41, 42, ISC, SC, Commission)
 - ii) For transparency, promote wider participation in ISC's assessment activities with relevant experts, and sufficient funding (41, 43, ISC, SC, Commission)
 - iii) SC and NC, with funding support, request ISC of validation work on key ISC assessments (41, 44, ISC, SC, NC)
- c) Improve support to ISC (59, 61, ISC, SC, NC, Commission)
 - i) Promote ISC officers' attendance at SA-SWG to present their assessments (61, ISC, SC)
 - ii) On-time submission of ISC documents to SC (61, ISC)
 - iii) Allow sufficient time for SC to review ISC's assessments and advice (65, ISC, SC)
- d) To promote harmonization of the Commission's science functions, the SC's research plan should include the ISC's work plan (64, ISC, SC)

7) Restructuring the SC process

- a) To clarify the role of SC and ISC in advising NC, the SC, as the statutory WCPFC body, should take the lead in endorsing the scientific work done by the Commission's science providers and SWGs, and providing advice to the NC and Commission, even if this advice is a simple endorsement of the advice of other bodies such as the ISC (49, 66, SPC, ISC, SC, NC, Commission)
 - i) The SC Chair introduces the SC report to NC (66, SC, NC)
 - ii) The ISC Chair presents and provides technical explanation to NC in a non-confrontational way between SC and ISC (66, ISC, SC, NC)

- b) Specialist Working Groups and related processes.
 - i) Strengthening Stock Assessment Preparatory Workshop (SAPW) by the WCPFC taking ownership of that activity with appropriate funding support (27, 50, SPC, SC, Commission)
 - ii) Incorporate the BI-SWG and ME-SWG into SAPW (50, SPC, SC)
 - iii) Revise the Terms of Reference of the SAPW to include provision for agreement on data inputs, model runs and the setting of an appropriate timetable (50, SPC, SC)
 - iv) Identify risks and seek solutions to address such risks when SAPW is expanded (51, SPC, SC)
 - v) Promote the participation of ISC and IATTC in the SWGs to promote coordination of ocean-wide assessments and include northern stocks in the agenda of the SAPW (52, SPC, ISC, IATTC, SC)
- c) Consider other workshops on species not included in the main SPC-OFP work programme (54, 64, SPC, SC)
- d) Allocate significantly more time to SA-SWG to thoroughly review all assessment-related outputs from SPC-OFP, ISC and CCMs (55, SA-SWG, SC)
- e) Restructuring of the SWGs
 - i) Have an annual meeting for EB-SWG and SA-SWG only (57, SC)
 - ii) Have biennial or occasional meetings for the FT-SWG and ST-SWG (57, SC)
 - iii) BI-SWG and ME-SWG to be absorbed into SAPW (or SA-SWG) or have occasional meetings (57, SC)
 - iv) Less formal process of the SWG meetings, including no national representation and more intensive involvement of experts (58, SC)
- f) Establish an Ad-hoc Group on Socio-economic Issues which identifies:
 - i) socio-economic issues and how they might be addressed (60, SC, Commission)
 - ii) types of information and analyses required to generate appropriate management advice (60, SC, Commission)
 - iii) availability of expertise within the CCMs and/or potential service providers to undertake the necessary work (60, SC, Commission)

III. IMPLEMENTATION

8) Implementation of the recommendations

- a) Develop a work plan for the implementation of these recommendations (70, SC, Commission).

[SC5 Summary Report/Attachment Q] Scientific Committee's Response on the Recommendations from the Independent Review of the Commission's Transitional Science Structure and Functions

| Recommended Item | Response from SC5 |
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| I. DATA CUSTODIANSHIP | |
| 1) Data gaps | 1) SC5 supported. |
| 2) Data management and confidentiality | 2) SC5 supported. |
| 3) Data custodianship service | 3) SC5 supported. |
| 4) Three-year service agreement with SPC to secure resources | 4) SC5 supported. |
| 5) Incorporation of ISC data into the WCPFC holdings | 5) Will be addressed. |
| II. SCIENCE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS | |
| 4) Process of project contract a) Update guidelines for SC work programme b) Improve the level of advertising, funding and scope of candidate projects | 4) Addressed and adopted. |
| 5) Quality of scientific advice available to the Commission a) Implement periodic external peer review process b) Develop a standard procedure for CCMs to undertake duplicate assessments c) Maintain transparency by posting research inputs and outputs on website d) Develop a strategy to maximize the use of science knowledge of the SPC-OFP and other existing or potential contractors e) SPC to continue training of talented individuals from developing CCMs to enhance their full participation in the scientific activities of the Commission | 5) a) Partially addressed and adopted. b) Recommendation not accepted by SC. c) SC5 supported. d) By posting on the Commission's website. e) SC5 supported. |
| 6) International Scientific Committee (ISC) a) Amend MOU to allow for ISC work to be requested by the SC b) To support robust science within the ISC i) Additional review by the SC and external peer review | 6) a) While non-ISC members support this amendment, most ISC members wanted to discuss this at WCPFC6. b) i) Not addressed at SC5 |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) For transparency, promote wider participation in ISC's assessment activities, and sufficient funding iii) SC and NC, with funding support, request ISC of validation work on key ISC assessments c) Improve support to ISC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Promote ISC officers' attendance at SA-SWG to present their assessments ii) On-time submission of ISC documents to SC iii) Allow sufficient time for SC to review ISC's assessments and advice d) To promote harmonization of the Commission's science functions, the SC's research plan should include the ISC's work plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) Not addressed at SC5 iii) Not addressed at SC5 c) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) SC noted it's feasible but cost implications here. ii) Recommend to ISC to post ISC's working papers on the ISC website. SC noted that ISC working papers require authorization by authors. iii) SC thought it feasible but need to adjust meeting time table with a suitable time gap between meetings. d) SC recommends that the SC work plan and the ISC work plan reference each other. |
| <p>7) Restructuring the SC process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To clarify the role of SC and ISC in advising NC, the SC, as the statutory WCPFC body, should take the lead in endorsing the scientific work done by the Commission's science providers and SWGs, and providing advice to the NC and Commission, even if this advice is a simple endorsement of the advice of other bodies such as the ISC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The SC Chair introduces the SC report to NC ii) The ISC Chair presents and provides technical explanation to NC in a non-confrontational way between SC and ISC b) Specialist Working Groups and related processes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Strengthening Stock Assessment Preparatory Workshop (SAPW) by the WCPFC taking ownership of that activity with appropriate funding support ii) Incorporate the BI-SWG and ME-SWG into SAPW iii) Revise the Terms of Reference of the SAPW to include provision for agreement on data inputs, model runs and the setting of an appropriate timetable | <p>7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Commission to decide. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) SC supported. ii) SC supported. b) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Generally support PWSA, strongly support to remain as an informal meeting, including relevant biological and methodological papers. SPC will facilitate the workshop. ii) Incorporate relevant biology and methods papers into SAPW iii) Revisit at SC6 iv) Inclusion of presentations within the SC of significant issues as identified in the SAPW. v) Funding considerations. |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv) Identify risks and seek solutions to address such risks when SAPW is expanded v) Promote the participation of ISC and IATTC in the SWGs to promote coordination of ocean-wide assessments and include northern stocks in the agenda of the SAPW c) Consider other workshops on species not included in the main SPC-OFP work programme d) Allocate significantly more time to SA-SWG to thoroughly review all assessment-related outputs from SPC-OFP, ISC and CCMs e) Restructuring of the SWGs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Have an annual meeting for EB-SWG and SA-SWG only ii) Have biennial or occasional meetings for the FT-SWG and ST-SWG iii) BI-SWG and ME-SWG to be absorbed into SAPW (or SA-SWG) or have occasional meetings iv) Less formal process of the SWG meetings, including no national representation and more intensive involvement of experts f) Establish an Ad-hoc Group on Socio-economic Issues which identifies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) socio-economic issues and how they might be addressed ii) types of information and analyses required to generate appropriate management advice iii) availability of expertise within the CCMs and/or potential service providers to undertake the necessary work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Generally support, perhaps as a special session within SC or as standalone workshops. Other bycatch species could be included as a special session into SC. d) Considered adequate for present schedule, re-consider with regard to work schedule. e) Alternative idea not reflected in consultancy report was adopted. Have one continuous SC session structured thematically, chaired by individual conveners. Secretariat, Chair, Vice-Chair and Conveners to plan details of new thematic structure intersessionally and post agreed plan on Commission's website. f) Consider items as special sessions of i)-iii) as interest arises. |
| III. IMPLEMENTATION | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8) Implementation of the recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Develop a work plan for the implementation of these recommendations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8) a) |

Outcomes of consideration of recommendations from the Independent Review of Interim Arrangements for Scientific Structure and Function in relation to i) the MoU between the Commission and ISC, ii) peer review and iii) data harmonization at the Fifth Regular Session of the Scientific Committee, 10-21 August 2009, Port Vila Vanuatu. (Paragraph numbers refer to the SC5 agreed Summary Report).

6.1 Data gaps

Obtaining ISC data

332. The ST-SWG Convenor provided some background on the issue of obtaining data from ISC. WCPFC5 recommended that the Secretariat work with ISC, SPC-OFP and relevant CCMs to develop a strategy for the harmonisation of ISC data and WCPFC data. The Secretariat prepared a draft proposal for this. The Statistics Working Group of the ISC, and the 9th Plenary (ISC9) session of the ISC, discussed the recommendations of the Independent Review and the Secretariat's proposal. ISC9 agreed that it would be appropriate for ISC and WCPFC to exchange data inventories and identify data gaps as a first step.

333. With regard to the assembly of data for stock assessments, the WCPFC and ISC use quite different operating procedures. Specifically the WCPFC pools data in a central repository (located with the Commissions data contractor in Noumea) before it is analysed; but ISC members do not submit operational data to a central repository. Instead each member uses its own operational data (for CPUE standardisation and other relevant studies) and brings the results to the stock assessment meeting for discussion and incorporation into model runs.

334. As a consequence of these different operating procedures, the ISC does not hold any fine scale (for example – operational catch and effort) data. The ISC does hold aggregated data, but this is the same data that CCMs should also have submitted to WCPFC; the only exception to this being that the ISC does hold some aggregated data for Mexico, which is a cooperating non-member of the WCPFC.

335. Despite these issues, it was recognised that there probably is a need to reconcile the data holdings of the ISC and WCPFC.

336. The SC recommended:

- i. The Secretariat provides an inventory of Commission data holdings for north Pacific stocks to ISC by ISC10.
- ii. The Secretariat, ISC, SPC-OFP, and interested CCMs complete a reconciliation of ISC and Commission data holdings, for north Pacific stocks, to identify any data gaps by 1st October 2010.
- iii. The Secretariat and ISC collaborate to exchange data, to address data gaps for north Pacific stocks, subject to the Commission's Rules and Procedures for the Protection of, Access to, and Dissemination of Data Provided to the Commission and the rules and procedures governing data exchange that are contained within ISC's Operations Manual.
- iv. The ISC and the Secretariat establish a mechanism for the periodic exchange of data to address gaps in the data for north Pacific stocks.
- v. The Secretariat provides a report of progress on these matters to SC6.

7.1 Review of existing and relations with other organisations

Review of existing and relations with other organisations

371. The WCPFC Executive Director, A. Wright, introduced a discussion of the existing MOUs between WCPFC and other organizations. Three issues were highlighted for the consideration of SC5:
- i. A recommendation of the *Independent Review of Interim Arrangements for Science Structure and Function* (IRIASSF) for the Commission to enter into three-year agreements with SPC-OFP as the Science Services Provider as adopted by WCPFC5;
 - ii. A recommendation of the IRIASSF to revise the existing MOU between WCPFC and ISC in order to allow the Scientific Committee to directly request advice from ISC on the status of North Pacific stocks as adopted by WCPFC5 (WCPFC5 Summary Report, para. 266(c), 271); and
 - iii. a Draft Memorandum of Cooperation on the Exchange and Release of Data with IATTC developed by the WCPFC Secretariat on the basis of Appendix 4 of the Commission's Rules of Procedures for the Protection of, Access to, and Dissemination of Data compiled by the Commission with comments provided by IATTC Contracting Parties when the draft was considered at the 80th session of IATTC in June 2009.
372. SC5 endorsed the revisions to the MOU with SPC to provide for a three-year arrangement as directed by the Commission.
373. In relation to the Memorandum of Cooperation with IATTC, SC5 noted the proposed revisions by IATTC CPs and referred the draft to TCC5 for further consideration.
374. While all non-ISC CCMs supported the proposed changes to the MOU with ISC, most ISC members of the Scientific Committee did not support the proposal, advising that ISC members are currently considering the implications of the proposed change and that the NC would be asked to also provide comments. Several CCMs considered that the issue of the MOU with ISC was linked to broader discussion to take place under the review of the IRIASSF under Agenda Item 10.3.

10.2 Peer review of stock assessments

400. SC5 agreed the following points with regard to the recommendation of the Independent Review in respect of peer reviews of stock assessments undertaken by the Scientific Committee for consideration by the Commission:
- i. A periodic peer review was seen as strengthening assessments and their outcomes, improving transparency, building understanding and confidence, and helping to ensure best practice in the delivery of stock assessments to the Commission.
 - ii. The results or absence of a peer review may not be used as an excuse to delay conservation and management actions.
 - iii. The SC recommends to undertake a peer review of a single stock assessment initially and use the outcomes of this review to inform the scope and resource demands that would be considered in formulating subsequent reviews.
 - iv. The SC recommends that an OFP assessment be selected for the initial review, in particular, the bigeye assessment undertaken for the WCPO;
 - v. Given the perceived difficulties in completing the assessment by May for the review to be undertaken in June and the report made available in July (as recommended by MRAG), the SC proposed the following process for undertaking the review:

- a. undertake a detailed review of the selected stock assessment considered by the SC the previous year;
 - b. provide an interim report to the Preparatory SA Workshop;
 - c. undertake a short review of the completed stock assessment report;
 - d. provide report on completed review to SC;
 - e. stock assessment group to provide comments on interim report provided to the Preparatory SA Workshop.
- vi. Participation by reviewer(s) in the Scientific Committee (and possibly the Preparatory SA Workshop) was seen be possibly beneficial but would have additional cost implications.
- vii. In the selection of reviewers, the need to consider the independence and expertise of reviewers would need to be balanced against costs.
- viii. As range of options for selecting reviewers were noted. These included:
 - a. CCMs
 - b. other RFMOs (e.g. IATTC)
 - c. the Center for Independent Experts - CIE is a group affiliated with the University of Miami that provides independent peer reviews of NMFS (USA) science nationwide, including reviews of stock assessments for fish and marine mammals
 - d. the Marine Resource Assessment Group (MRAG).
- ix. A recommendation on a specific reviewer is difficult to make at this time until the costs associated which each of these options are more fully understood. However, the SC saw much benefit in the independence of the selected reviewer.

401. SC5 noted that if the review of the OFP assessment was undertaken during 2010, there may be additional cost implications.

402. SC5 requested that this proposal for peer reviewing an OFP assessment be passed to the Northern Committee and ISC as an information paper for their consideration.