



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
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Cooperation with Other Organizations

WCPFC-SC21-2025/GN-IP-03

Submitted by the Secretariat

INTRODUCTION

1. Article 22 of the Convention requires the Commission to collaborate with other intergovernmental organizations that may contribute to attaining the objective of the Convention. The WCPFC maintains formal relations with twelve intergovernmental institutions and agencies, including other regional fisheries management organisations. The broad objectives of these relationships are to promote cooperation and collaboration in areas of mutual interest. The Commission has relations with the organisations listed below, and the agreements with each of these organisations can be found on the [Relations with Other Organisations](#) page under the WCPFC Key Documents webpage.

- 1) The Pacific Community in respect of the Oceanic Fisheries Programme (SPC-OFP);
- 2) Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA);
- 3) International Scientific Committee for Tunas and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC);
- 4) Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP);
- 5) Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC);
- 6) Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC);
- 7) Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR);
- 8) Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT);
- 9) Agreement for the Conservation of Albatross and Petrels (ACAP);
- 10) North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC);
- 11) South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO); and
- 12) North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC).

EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS

A. *The Pacific Community (SPC)*

2. The WCPFC and SPC-OFP data exchange agreement was adopted in 2009.
3. An MOU between WCPFC and SPC was signed in December 2005 for 2006 scientific services, updating the specific services annually. In 2016, the three-year MOU was revised, highlighting the development of management strategy evaluation to support the implementation of the Commission's harvest strategy framework. In 2019, the three-year MOU was revised, with the terminology of 'MOU' being replaced by the 'Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)'. The *Agreement for the Provision of Scientific Services to the Commission and Assistance to Members by the Pacific Community* (ANNEX 1) for 2025 was entirely signed by both parties on 21 January 2025.

B. *Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)*

4. As directed by the Fourth Regular Session of the Commission, an MOU between the two Secretariats was finalized.
5. There is also a *Service Level Agreement (SLA)* between the FFA and the Commission for VMS services consistent with paragraph 5 of Article 15 of the Convention.

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

6. The Second Regular Session of the Commission in December 2005 adopted an MOU with ISC.

D. *Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)*

7. The Fourth Regular Session of the Commission in December 2007 adopted an MOU with SPREP.

E. *Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)*

8. The Fourth Regular Session of the Commission in December 2007 adopted an MOU with IOTC.

F. *Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)*

9. An MOU was executed by representatives of the IATTC and WCPFC following its endorsement by WCPFC3 at Apia, Samoa, in December 2006.
10. In December 2009, the two Commissions signed a *Memorandum of Cooperation on the Exchange and Release of Data* at the end of WCPFC6 at Papeete, French Polynesia.
11. A *Memorandum of Cooperation on the Cross Endorsement of Regional Observers between WCPFC and IATTC* was signed at the IATTC meeting in La Jolla, USA, in July 2011.¹
12. At WCPFC20, there was strong support for strengthening collaboration between the two RFMOs to enhance the effectiveness of conservation and management efforts in the region. WCPFC further tasked its Secretariat with strengthening its relations with the IATTC to foster closer cooperation and

¹ See Attachment Q, [WCPFC7 Summary Report](#).

enhance cross-RFMO coordination in developing the MSE and management procedures for the South Pacific albacore fishery.

13. In 2024, both Commissions independently acknowledged the need for stronger coordination in the management of the South Pacific albacore (SPA) fishery, leading to the initiation of a process to establish a Joint Working Group (SPAJWG). This effort culminated in the First Informal Virtual Joint Meeting in May 2025, co-chaired by the Executive Directors of the WCPFC and IATTC. Participants from member countries and relevant organizations welcomed the initiative. They reviewed a consolidated draft of Terms of Reference (TOR), incorporating elements from each Commission's initial proposals, to formulate an official JWG. These TORs outline the core functions of the SPAJWG, including harmonizing harvest strategies, coordinating scientific research, improving data sharing, and developing compatible management measures for SPA fisheries across both Convention areas.

14. The two Secretariats developed a provisional Workplan for 2026 that identifies specific deliverables for the SPAJWG's first formal year. These include aligning stock assessment schedules, conducting a joint review of the WCPFC's Management Procedure for SPA, and coordinating on data exchange and monitoring frameworks. Key cross-cutting issues – such as capacity building for Small Island Developing States, transparency in multilingual communication, and inclusive stakeholder participation – have also been embedded in the Workplan. The SPAJWG is expected to be formally established upon adoption of the finalized TOR and Workplan by the IATTC and WCPFC at their respective annual meetings in September and December 2025.

15. In parallel with efforts on South Pacific albacore, the WCPFC and IATTC have also been advancing collaboration through the Pacific Bluefin Tuna Joint Working Group (PBF-JWG), particularly in the development of a joint electronic Pacific Bluefin Catch Documentation System (e-PBCD). This initiative, discussed in detail at the Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) Technical Meetings under the PBF-JWG framework, aims to modernize and harmonize catch tracking mechanisms across both Commissions. The proposed e-PBCD is designed to enhance traceability, reduce opportunities for IUU fishing, and ensure the integrity of Pacific bluefin tuna supply chains by enabling near real-time validation and data exchange. Progress to date has included the identification of key system requirements, shared data elements, and governance structures that would ensure mutual recognition and interoperability between the IATTC and WCPFC schemes. Continued coordination is expected as technical and legal considerations are refined ahead of future implementation discussions.

G. Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)

16. WCPFC5 adopted an Arrangement with CCAMLR. The Arrangement was signed by the Chair of CCAMLR on 12 January 2009 and remained in effect for three (3) years. On 10 March 2013, the Arrangement was renewed by removing the specific effective period and signed by the Chairs of both organizations.

H. Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)

17. An MOU between CCSBT and WCPFC was signed following the endorsement of the Second Regular Session of the Commission in December 2005 at Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia.

18. WCPFC13 and CCSBT agreed to a Memorandum of Cooperation on the Exchange and Release of Data between WCPFC and CCSBT and a Memorandum of Cooperation on the Endorsement of WCPFC ROP Observers for Observing Transshipments of Southern Bluefin Tuna on the High Seas of the WCPFC

Convention Area with CCSBT. The signing of these two memoranda was concluded on 5 June 2017. The CCSBT and WCPFC Secretariats are continuing to progress work towards operationalizing this Memorandum of Cooperation.

19. In 2024–2025, the Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) Technical Meeting, under the framework of the Pacific Bluefin Tuna Joint Working Group (PBF-JWG), initiated consultations with the CCSBT Secretariat to inform the development of the electronic Pacific Bluefin Catch Documentation System (e-PBCD). Drawing on CCSBT's experience in designing and operating its e-CDS for Southern Bluefin Tuna, these consultations focused on developing a robust system architecture, exploring data exchange protocols, and identifying legal and procedural considerations for inter-RFMO collaboration. In June 2025, WCPFC Secretariat arranged for an opportune informal discussion on e-PBCD development with IATTC Secretariat, CCSBT Secretariat, the Chair of the e-PBCD CDS technical meeting, and representatives from the Japan Fisheries Agency. The outcomes of these discussions were highlighted in the NC21 Summary Report, which noted the mutual benefits of aligning documentation frameworks and leveraging CCSBT's operational knowledge to guide the planning and technical design of the WCPFC-IATTC e-PBCD system.

I. *Agreement for the Conservation of Albatross and Petrels (ACAP)*

20. The Fourth Regular Session of the Commission in December 2007 adopted an MOU with ACAP.

J. *North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC)*

21. The two Secretariats developed an MOU, which was approved by WCPFC06 at Papeete, French Polynesia, in December 2009 and signed in December 2010.

K. *South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO)*

22. The signing of an MOU between the SPRFMO and the WCPFC was finalized on 6 August 2020. The objective of the MOU is to facilitate cooperation between the two Organizations to advance their respective objectives, particularly concerning stocks or species that are within the competence or mutual interest of both Organizations.

23. This MOU was renewed following approval from both Commissions with the removal of a term limit to the MOU. The Chairs of each organisation signed the renewed MOU on 22 May 2024.

L. *North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC)*

24. NPFC is an intergovernmental organization established to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries resources in its Convention Area while protecting the marine ecosystems of the North Pacific Ocean in which these resources occur. Fisheries resources covered by the Convention are all fish, mollusks, crustaceans, and other marine species caught by fishing vessels within its Convention Area, excluding (i) sedentary species insofar as they are subject to the sovereign rights of coastal States and indicator species of vulnerable marine ecosystems as listed in, or adopted according to the NPFC Convention; (ii) catadromous species; (iii) marine mammals, marine reptiles and seabirds; and (iv) other marine species already covered by pre-existing international fisheries management instruments within the area of competence of such instruments. The WCPF Commission, at the WCPFC20 meeting in December 2023, approved the signing of the MOU with NPFC. The NPF Commission, at its 8th annual meeting in April 2024, adopted the MOU. The MOU was signed on 29 October 2024.

OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) – Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP)

25. With SPC, WCPFC has continuously cooperated with CWP as a Member since 2008. The CWP meets approximately every three years. The objectives of the CWP are to (a) keep under continuous review the requirements for fishery statistics for research, policymaking, and management; (b) agree on standard concepts, definitions, classifications, and methodologies for the collection and collation of fishery statistics; and (c) make proposals and recommendations for action concerning the collection, collation, and dissemination of fishery statistics.

North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES)

26. PICES is an intergovernmental scientific organization established in 1992 to promote and coordinate marine research in the northern North Pacific and adjacent seas. Its present members are Canada, the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America. PICES continues to send an invitation letter to the Secretariat to attend the PICES Annual Meeting. The 2025 PICES meeting will be held from November 8 to 14, 2025, in Yokohama, Japan.

27. At NC21 in July 2025, the PICES introduced the Basin-scale Events and Coastal Impacts (BECI) Project to WCPFC Northern Committee participants as a side event. The BECI initiative, led by PICES and supported by partners such as NPAFC and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, aims to build a North Pacific Ocean Knowledge Network that integrates environmental monitoring, climate data, and ecosystem indicators to support timely and coordinated responses to ocean change. Initial collaboration between WCPFC and PICES through BECI is expected to enhance cross-RFMO coordination, provide climate and oceanographic information relevant to highly migratory species, and support the implementation of climate-resilient fisheries management under WCPFC's climate workplan

International Seabed Authority (ISA)

28. ISA is an autonomous international organization established under the 1982 [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea](#) (UNCLOS) and the [1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea](#) (1994 Agreement). ISA is the organization through which States Parties to UNCLOS organize and control all mineral resources-related activities in the Area for the benefit of humankind as a whole. In doing so, ISA has the mandate to ensure the adequate protection of the marine environment from the harmful effects that may arise from deep-seabed-related activities. In December 2024, WCPFC21 approved the WCPFC's seeking observer status with the International Seabed Authority. In addition, the Commission tasked the Secretariat, as recommended by SC20, to engage with a broad range of stakeholders to gain awareness and understanding of deep-seabed mining activities and their potential direct or indirect impact on tuna fisheries in the WCPFC Convention Area. A request for observer status for WCPFC will be considered by the ISA Assembly in July 2025. The WCPFC Secretariat has been developing broader networks with a range of stakeholders to ensure it can enhance support to the Commission members. This has included some engagement with other RFMOs, particularly IATTC. More detailed information is available in [SC21-EB-IP-15](#).

Fisheries and Resources Monitoring Systems (FIRMS) Partnership

29. FIRMS is a global information-sharing partnership coordinated by the Food and Agriculture

Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. Its mission is to facilitate global access to standardized and authoritative information on the status and trends of fishery resources and their management. FIRMS achieves this through structured collaboration with international, regional, and national fisheries organizations, including Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs), and more broadly, Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs). The platform supports the development of global public services, including the State of the Stocks Index (SoSI), the Global Record of Stocks and Fisheries (GRSF), and the biennial State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) report. Since 2007, the WCPFC has held observer status in FIRMS, reflecting its longstanding interest in harmonizing global fisheries information and the value of its stock assessment work in broader international assessments. Despite this, WCPFC has not yet become a formal Partner and therefore does not currently participate in FIRMS governance or contribute structured metadata to FIRMS products.

30. In December 2024, the Commission tasked the Scientific Committee (SC21) to assess the value of the WCPFC joining the Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) Partnership and to report its findings to WCPFC22 in 2025. The paper SC21-ST-WP-06 addresses that request by providing the objectives, structure, and key information systems of the FIRMS, alongside an analysis of the implications and benefits for WCPFC should it move forward with formal partnership.

Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

31. The BBNJ Agreement, formally known as the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, was adopted on 19 June 2023 as the third implementing agreement to UNCLOS. It aims to conserve and sustainably use marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, both now and in the long term, by strengthening international cooperation and implementing relevant UNCLOS provisions. The Agreement covers four main areas: marine genetic resources and benefit-sharing, area-based management tools including marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments, and capacity-building with technology transfer. It also provides for cross-cutting issues, institutional arrangements (such as a Conference of the Parties and secretariat), a clearing-house mechanism, and a funding mechanism. Open for signature from 20 September 2023 to 20 September 2025, it will enter into force 120 days after the 60th ratification or equivalent instrument is deposited.

32. At WCPFC21, the Commission tasked the Secretariat to maintain active engagement with international ocean conservation initiatives, particularly the Preparatory Conference for the BBNJ Agreement (Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction), and to provide regular updates to the Commission on international developments that may affect WCPFC and its work.

RFMO and RFB Compliance Manager Informal Networks

33. Informal collaboration between tuna RFMO Secretariat compliance counterparts (CCSBT, IATTC, ICCAT, IOTC, and WCPFC) has been continuing under the umbrella of the Tuna Compliance Network (TCN) since 2017 with the support of the International MCS Network and with limited funding from the current and previous GEF-funded FAO Common Oceans Tuna Project. In late 2020, similar informal collaboration commenced under the umbrella of the Pan-Pacific Fisheries Compliance Network (PPFCN), also supported by the International MCS Network, amongst Fisheries Secretariat Compliance counterparts with areas of responsibility in the Pan Pacific region (CCAMLR, CCSBT, IATTC, NPAFC, NPFC, SPRFMO, and WCPFC).

34. In June 2025, the WCPFC Secretariat participated in an in-person combined meeting of the Tuna Compliance Network and Pan Pacific Fisheries Compliance Network, with colleagues from CCAMLR, CCSBT, IATTC, ICCAT, IOTC, NPFC, and SPRFMO. The meeting was hosted at the NPFC Secretariat Headquarters in Tokyo, Japan, and was supported by the IMCS Network. Reflecting WCPFC20 and WCPFC21 outcomes, including a task that the Secretariat progress data exchange arrangements with RFMOs (IATTC, IOTC, CCSBT, SPRFMO, and NPFC) over 2025, noting the need for reciprocity in data exchange, the WCPFC Secretariat participated in discussions which included consideration of the need to:

- a. identify specific data and information to be shared and any differences in the standards applied to that data and information;
- b. identify the mechanism for sharing (including potential interim mechanisms) with appropriate security and recording of exchanged data; and
- c. ensure or propose amendments if necessary to ensure MOUs and respective data sharing requirements enable the types of data exchanges to occur as directed by WCPFC21.

35. Technical discussions with individual RFMOs under the auspices of existing MOUs, and through TCN and PPFCN, will be shaped by the above principles in the context of the objectives for the reciprocal data exchanges.

36. In response to additional taskings to the Secretariat in support of the Chairs of the ROP-IWG and RSM-WG, information relating to transshipment and port CCM obligations and supporting processes was shared.