

Prepared by the SC Chair, Convenors, and the Secretariat

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. At SC20, the Committee reviewed existing SC operation-related documents and requested the compilation and update of all relevant guidelines (paras 766–774, SC20 Summary Report). This includes:
  - 1) Guidance on Paper Submission, including eligibility to submit papers;
  - 2) Template for Project Proposals;
  - 3) Guidelines for the SC Chair and Theme Convenors

## II. FUNCTIONS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

2. According to Article 12 of the WCPFC Convention (**Attachment A**), the role of the Scientific Committee is to ensure that the Commission obtains the best available scientific information for its consideration. To fulfill this role, the Convention outlines several key functions for the SC, including:
  - Reviewing stock assessments, scientific analyses, and other science-related work and recommendations prepared by scientific experts before their consideration by the Commission;
  - Reporting findings or conclusions to the Commission on the status of target stocks, as well as non-target, associated, or dependent species within the Convention Area;
  - Making recommendations to the Commission, either as directed or on its initiative, concerning the conservation and management of these species;  
Recommending a research plan to the Commission and encouraging coordination of scientific research activities within the Convention Area.

## III. GUIDANCE ON THE SUBMISSION OF PAPERS TO THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

3. All documents for the Scientific Committee must be submitted via the dedicated *Scientific Committee Document Submission* system. Papers submitted to SC should contain information relevant to address specific requests from the Commission or issues highlighted in the previous meetings. They should be directly linked to one or more of the functions identified in Article 12 of the WCPFC Convention.:

### **Schedule for paper submission**

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| • A paper title, a preliminary abstract, and a justification <sup>1</sup> | – 50 days before the start of the SC |
| • Full papers   | – 30 days before the start of the SC |
| • Specific SSP papers (papers for SA and MSE)                             | – 18 days before the start of the SC |
| • Annual Report – Part 1  | – No later than 7 July each year     |

4. Final decision on the acceptance of the submitted papers, and decision for working papers or information papers, will be notified to the paper submitter. Where possible, papers submitted to the SC should include specific advice for the SC's consideration.

### **Type of SC papers**

5. SC papers are generally categorized into the following types: Working Papers, Information Papers, and Observer Papers. SC20 adopted the following general rule concerning the submission of papers to the SC (para 768, SC20 Summary Report):

*“As a general rule, Working Papers will be submitted by CCMs, the Secretariat, and the SSP. Observers may submit Information Papers unless invited by the Secretariat, SC Theme Convenors, or the SC Chair to present a Working Paper.”*

#### **a. Working Papers (WPs)**

6. Working Papers (WPs) are documents that address substantive issues requiring consideration by the Scientific Committee. These issues typically respond to specific requests from the Commission or arise from priorities identified in the SC's work programme. WPs should include clear advice or recommendations for the SC to consider, and will be formally presented for review and discussion during the meeting. Presentations of WPs will be limited to a maximum of 15 minutes, except for stock assessment papers, which may be allotted up to 30 minutes.

#### **b. Information Papers (IPs)**

7. Information Papers (IPs) provide supplementary information relevant to issues under consideration by the Scientific Committee. They may respond to specific requests from the Commission or support topics identified in SC's work programme. IPs will not be formally presented during the meeting but may be referenced by the SC in its discussions as it develops recommendations for the Commission.

#### **c. Observer Papers (OPs)**

8. Observer Papers (OPs) are submissions from Observers to the Commission that provide relevant background information, specific positions, or statements on issues under consideration by the Scientific Committee. For a detailed specification of observers, please refer to Rule 36 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure.

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<sup>1</sup> A justification explaining how the paper aligns with the functions of the Scientific Committee as outlined in Article 12 of the Convention

#### IV. SUBMISSION OF SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE PROJECT PROPOSALS

9. A project proposal must be submitted to and approved by the Scientific Committee for any new initiative that aims to conduct research relevant to specific requests from the Commission or priorities identified in the SC's work programme. This requirement applies to both projects seeking funding from the Commission and those that do not request any funding. Where possible, project proposals should be included when papers are submitted to the SC. In some cases, proposals may also be developed during the SC meeting in response to discussions or recommendations from working groups.

10. All project proposals must be submitted using the template provided in **Attachment B**, or a format consistent with it. Once the Scientific Committee has accepted all project proposals, CCMs will rank projects based on the *SC Project Scoring Table* below, as adopted at SC17. Project rankings will be forwarded to the Finance and Administration Committee and the Commission for final approval on funding.

**SC17 Summary Report, Table WP-01.** SC project scoring table. Colours represent priority rankings (6,9 = High; 3,4 = Medium; 1,2 = Low):

		Importance to WCPFC Management Outcomes or to the functioning of the SC			
		Rank	Low	Moderate	High
Feasibility: Likelihood of Success	Low	1	2	3	
	Moderate	2	4	6	
	High	3	6	9	

Notes:

**Importance criteria** evaluate the significance of the outcomes of the proposal in contributing to the successful management of the WCPFC stocks or the functioning of the SC (e.g. is the proposal aligned with the WCPFC research and/or management priorities; does the proposal contribute to the effective planning and functioning of the SC; are the intended outputs/benefits well-defined and relevant; what is the level of impact and likelihood that the proposal outputs will be adopted; is the proposal cost effective). High= Essential; Moderate=Important but not essential; Low=Not Important.

**Feasibility criteria** evaluate the proposal’s potential for success i.e., how likely is the proposal to achieve its stated objectives (e.g. are the objectives clearly stated, is the methodology sound, are the project objectives realistic and likely to be achieved, does the research team [if identified] have the ability, capacity and track record to deliver the outputs).

11. The Rules of Procedure do not prevent Commission-approved Observers from submitting a project proposal to WCPFC jointly with a CCM or the Scientific Services Provider. However, the submission of a project proposal independently of the SSP or CCMs, particularly in the case where Commission funding is requested, does not appear to be within the rules for participation in the Commission and its subsidiary bodies (Rule 36(7) and 36(3) of the Commission's Rules of Procedure).

#### V. GUIDELINES FOR THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE CHAIR AND THEME CONVENORS

12. SC8 adopted *Guidelines for the SC Chair and Theme Convenors* to assist with the meeting process and ensure consistency across Scientific Committee (SC) meetings. These guidelines were revised and adopted at SC13 (document SC13-GN-IP-03) and SC21 (SC21-GN-WP-04).

## 1. General guidelines for the SC Chair and Theme Convenors

13. The SC Chair and Convenors will assist the Secretariat in developing a provisional annotated agenda for SC meetings (*Rule 2, Rules of Procedure*).
14. The SC Chair will convene an SC Officers' Meeting before the SC meeting. The Meeting will consider SC meeting procedures, including review of the indicative schedule and the associated volume of theme papers to be covered. The SC Chair and Convenors will direct discussions in the plenary meeting.
15. The SC Chair and Convenors will ensure that all presentations and discussions are relevant to the SC agenda and that discussions remain focused on science and scientific advice. While discussions on agenda items should be encouraged, the SC Chair and Convenors should ensure that plenary discussions are focused and that commentary is concise.
16. The SC Chair and Theme Convenors, in consultation with the Secretariat, develop a list of Informal Small Groups (ISGs) and finalize the list at the SC Officer's Meeting for consideration at the Heads of Delegations Meeting.
17. The SC Chair and Convenors will ensure observance of the Commission's Rules of Procedure, *mutatis mutandis*, to accord the right to speak, announce the list of speakers, and, with the consent of the Scientific Committee, declare the list of speakers closed.
18. The SC Chair and Convenors should be mindful of non-English speaking delegations, particularly when text is edited on screen. The draft text will be circulated prior to submission for approval by the SC. Appropriate time should then be given for the plenary to consider the text before approval.
19. The SC Chair and Convenors, in consultation with any relevant Informal Small Group (ISG) facilitators, will coordinate schedules for the reports of ISG meeting outputs for consideration by the plenary, making every effort to avoid duplicating discussions that were made at the ISGs.
20. The SC Chair and Convenors should facilitate consensus by briefly summarizing discussions across the floor. They should avoid extended monologues and remain attentive to CCMs wishing to make interventions during the meeting.
21. The SC Chair and Convenors should refrain from directly or indirectly promoting their personal views or the positions of their respective delegations while presiding over the plenary or thematic sessions.
22. If consensus cannot be reached, the SC Chair and Convenors will consult on the most appropriate way to incorporate differing views into the advice provided to the Commission. The use of breakout groups may help achieve a consensus-based outcome.

## 2. Guidelines for the SC Chair

23. The rules and powers of the SC Chair are explained in Rule 9 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure, which is annexed below.

### Rule 9 (Function of the Chairman)

1. *In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him or her elsewhere in these rules or by the Convention, the Chairman shall declare the opening and closing of each plenary meeting of the Commission, direct the discussions in plenary meeting, ensure observance of these rules, accord the right to speak, announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Commission, declare the list of speakers closed, put questions and announce decisions. He or she shall rule on points of order and, subject to these rules, shall have complete control of the proceedings at any meeting and over the maintenance of order thereat. The Chairman may, in the course of discussion of an item, propose to the Commission the limitation of the time to be allowed to speakers, the limitation of the number of times each representative may speak, the closure of the list of speakers or the closure of the debate. He or she may also propose the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting or the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion.*
2. *The Chairman, in the exercise of his or her functions, remains under the authority of the Commission.*
3. *The Vice-Chairman acting as Chairman shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairman.*

### **3. Guidelines for the Theme Convenors**

24. Once the deadline for titles and preliminary abstracts has passed and Working Papers and Information Papers have been identified, the Convenors shall review the provisional annotated agenda for their Theme session, taking into account specific requests from the Commission and the submitted papers. The revised annotated theme agenda should be submitted to the Secretariat as soon as practicable.

25. In preparing the annotated theme agenda, Convenors, in consultation with the SC Chair as needed, will determine whether submitted papers should be designated as Working Papers or provided as Information Papers for reference. Papers that are not relevant to the agenda should not be accepted. All papers pertinent to each agenda item must be listed in the theme agenda. During the theme session, Convenors should also identify any Information Papers that support or are directly related to the corresponding Working Papers. Any updates to the provisional annotated agenda, including changes to paper classifications or submissions, should be promptly communicated to the Secretariat.

26. Convenors should ensure that only Working Papers or substantive issues are presented for consideration by the SC. Information Papers, which are not presented verbally, may be referred to by the SC in discussion and in formulating recommendations to the Commission. Further guidance on the criteria for submitting and accepting SC papers is included in **Attachment C**.

27. Convenors may accept Working Papers from Observers if deemed appropriate and where it is relevant to the work of the SC and within the scope of competence of the Observer.

28. The submission of papers for SC sessions should follow the timeline specified in these guidelines. Recognizing the importance of allowing CCMs sufficient time to review all documents in advance of the SC, Convenors, in consultation with the SC Chair, should adhere strictly to the agreed deadlines and give

Careful consideration to enforcing timely submissions.

29. Convenors shall provide clear guidance to each presenter regarding the time allocated for the presentation and discussion of their paper, to ensure the Theme session remains within its scheduled timeframe. As a general rule, presentations of Working Papers will be limited to a maximum of 15 minutes, except for stock assessment papers, which may be allotted up to 30 minutes.

30. Convenors will coordinate with the Head Rapporteur to ensure that all presentations and related discussions during their Theme session are accurately captured for inclusion in the SC Summary Report. This may include enlisting support rapporteurs if needed, assisting in compiling summaries of each presentation, and collaborating with the Head Rapporteur in preparing the final summary report for the Theme session.

31. Upon completion of presentations and discussions within each Theme session, Convenors will develop draft recommendations. Additional guidance on the formulation of SC recommendations is provided in **Attachment D**. Draft recommendations should be circulated to all SC participants for comment and feedback. Each Theme will then reconvene at a designated time in the Meeting Schedule to conduct a final review and adopt the recommendations. Any revisions to the initial draft should be presented using the track changes feature. The Head Rapporteur, Secretariat, or SC Officers will support the finalization of recommendations for each Theme. All finalized recommendations will be reviewed and adopted by the plenary. Convenors should assist the plenary in achieving consensus during the adoption process.

32. Convenors should remain mindful of the time allocated to their session and, where possible, utilize opportunities to manage time efficiently.

## **VI. THE ROLE OF INFORMAL SMALL GROUPS (ISGS)**

33. Informal Small Groups (ISGs) play a supporting role in the Scientific Committee process by providing a focused forum for developing conceptual frameworks and building consensus on complex or technical issues. These groups operate on the margins of the plenary and contribute directly to the SC's deliberative and advisory functions.

34. The SC Chair and Theme Convenors, in consultation with the Secretariat, may develop an initial list of ISG meetings as needed before the SC session. To promote efficiency and avoid last-minute congestion, ISGs should be limited in number and, where possible, begin their work early in the meeting. Heads of Delegations are responsible for confirming the initial list of ISGs and selecting facilitators to chair each ISG. The SC Chair and Theme Convenors will coordinate with ISG facilitators to manage meeting schedules and ensure alignment with broader SC proceedings.

35. The facilitator is responsible for preparing a summary report outlining the group's discussions, key conclusions, and any recommendations. Summaries of ISG meetings are submitted to the plenary for review and consideration. The plenary will make every effort to avoid duplicating discussions already addressed within ISG sessions, thereby ensuring efficient use of meeting time and reducing redundancy in plenary deliberations. The summaries of the ISGs will be incorporated into the SC Summary Report and, if necessary, also presented by the facilitator to the SC plenary.

**CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF  
HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS IN THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC OCEAN**

***Article 12***

***Functions of the Scientific Committee***

1. The Scientific Committee is established to ensure that the Commission obtains for its consideration the best scientific information available.
2. The functions of the Committee shall be to:
  - (a) recommend to the Commission a research plan, including specific issues and items to be addressed by the scientific experts or by other organizations or individuals, as appropriate, and identify data needs and coordinate activities that meet those needs;
  - (b) review the assessments, analyses, other work and recommendations prepared for the Commission by the scientific experts prior to consideration of such recommendations by the Commission and provide information, advice and comments thereon, as necessary;
  - (c) encourage and promote cooperation in scientific research, taking into account the provisions of article 246 of the 1982 Convention, in order to improve information on highly migratory fish stocks, non-target species, and species belonging to the same ecosystem or associated with or dependent upon such stocks in the Convention Area;
  - (d) review the results of research and analyses of target stocks or non-target or associated or dependent species in the Convention Area;
  - (e) report to the Commission its findings or conclusions on the status of target stocks or non target or associated or dependent species in the Convention Area;
  - (f) in consultation with the Technical and Compliance Committee, recommend to the Commission the priorities and objectives of the regional observer programme and assess the results of that programme;
  - (g) make reports and recommendations to the Commission as directed, or on its own initiative, on matters concerning the conservation and management of and research on target stocks or non-target or associated or dependent species in the Convention Area; and
  - (h) perform such other functions and tasks as may be requested by or assigned to it by the Commission.
3. The Committee shall exercise its functions in accordance with such guidelines and directives as the Commission may adopt.
4. The representatives of the Oceanic Fisheries Programme of the Pacific Community and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, or their successor organizations, shall be invited to participate in the work of the Committee. The Committee may also invite other organizations or individuals with scientific expertise in matters related to the work of the Commission to participate in its meetings.

## TEMPLATE FOR SC PROJECT PROPOSALS

SC9 endorsed a project proposal template outlining the minimum set of issues to be addressed when submitting a proposal to the Scientific Committee (*see Attachment K, SC9 Summary Report*). At SC20, it was recommended that the template be updated to include:

- 1) Information on the WCPFC datasets required to support the project, and
- 2) Comments from the WCPFC SSP regarding the feasibility of providing the requested data in the specified format, where possible (*see paragraph 771, SC20 Summary Report*).

The updated template is provided in **Table 1** below and should be used whenever possible for submitting all project proposals to the Scientific Committee.

**Table 1.** Proposals should address the following issues as needed.

<b>Part A: Administrative Summary</b>	
<b>1. Project Title</b>	<i>The official name of the project is concise yet descriptive</i>
<b>2. Organization</b>	<i>Name of the institution or organization submitting the proposal.</i>
<b>3. Administrative Contact</b>	<i>Primary point of contact for administrative matters (name, position, email, phone number).</i>
<b>4. Principal Investigator (PI) and CV</b>	<i>Lead researcher responsible for project execution. Attach a brief CV highlighting expertise relevant to the project.</i>
<b>5. Commencement and Completion Date</b>	<i>Planned project start and end dates (day/month/year).</i>
<b>6. Project Budget Summary</b>	<i>Overview of major cost categories:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Salaries</li> <li>○ Travel</li> <li>○ Operating Costs (e.g., equipment, supplies)</li> <li>○ Other Costs (e.g., sub-contracts, dissemination)</li> </ul>
<b>Part B: Project Proposal Description</b>	
<b>1. Project Title</b>	<i>The official name of the project, concise yet descriptive</i>
<b>2. Background and Need</b>	<i>Overview of the problem or issue being addressed, its relevance to WCPFC, and why it needs to be investigated now.</i>
<b>3. Objectives and Benefits</b>	<i>Specific aims of the project and anticipated benefits for WCPFC fisheries management, stock assessment, compliance, or science.</i>
<b>4. Note</b>	<i>Important clarifications, caveats, or context the SC should know upfront.</i>
<b>5. Rationale</b>	<i>Explanation of why this project approach/methodology is appropriate. Include scientific reasoning and expected impact.</i>
<b>6. Assumptions</b>	<i>Any assumptions on which the project is based (e.g., data availability, stakeholder cooperation, funding conditions).</i>
<b>7. Scope of Work</b>	<i>Detailed description of tasks and deliverables. Clearly define the boundaries of what the project will and will not cover.</i>
<b>8. Activity Schedule</b>	<i>Timeline showing key activities and milestones, possibly in a table or Gantt chart format.</i>
<b>9. Project Outcomes</b>	<i>Expected tangible results (e.g., reports, models, improved data sets,</i>



	<i>advice for stock assessments).</i>
<b>10. Forms of Results</b>	<i>How the results will be presented (e.g., written reports, presentations at SC, datasets, policy recommendations).</i>
<b>11. Methods</b>	<i>How the results will be presented (e.g., written reports, presentations at SC, datasets, policy recommendations).</i>
<b>12. Data Management Plan / Data Sets Required</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Specify data needed from WCPFC or SSP (Secretariat of the Pacific Community's Statistics and Science Programme).</i></li> <li>2. <i>Assess the feasibility of receiving/accessing the required WCPFC data in appropriate formats.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Include how data will be stored, secured, and shared.</i></li> </ol>
<b>13. Other Related Projects</b>	<i>Mention any existing or previous projects with similar objectives to ensure synergy or avoid duplication.</i>
<b>14. Collaborations</b>	<i>List project partners, contributors, and describe their roles. Include inter-agency collaborations if any.</i>
<b>15. Project Staff and CVs</b>	<i>List key project personnel and attach brief CVs focusing on relevant qualifications and experience.</i>
<b>16. Risks of Project Not Achieving Objectives</b>	<i>Identify major risks (e.g., delays in data provision, logistical challenges) and proposed mitigation measures.</i>
<b>17. Timeframe</b>	<i>Estimated duration for each major phase and final delivery, consistent with Activity Schedule.</i>
<b>18. Budget</b>	<i>Detailed budget breakdown, linked to project activities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Personnel</li> <li>○ Travel</li> <li>○ Operating</li> <li>○ Other (include justification where needed)</li> </ul>
<b>19. References</b>	<i>List scientific literature, reports, or data sources cited throughout the proposal.</i>

SC9 also approved a set of assessment criteria, which could be valuable for CCMs in evaluating project proposals for funding support from the Commission (Attachment K, SC9 Summary Report). These criteria are included in **Table 2** below:

**Table 2.** Research proposal assessment criteria (source: Attachment K, SC9 Summary Report). Scores for assessing proposals: 1 = very low; 2 = low; 3 = medium; 4 = high; 5 = very high

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>Score (1-5)</b>	<b>Justification for the score</b>
<b>Attractiveness</b>		
Is the proposal aligned with a priority project listed in the Commission's Scientific Work Programme and the budget allocated to it?		
Are the needs and planned outputs/benefits well-defined and relevant?		
Adoption and uptake. What is the level of impact and likelihood that the project outputs will be adopted? Is the pathway for uptake described?		
Cost effectiveness: Is the project cost-effective? Is it using other sources to lever additional funds?		
Is there an appropriate level of collaboration between the applicant and other relevant researchers, fisheries managers, and the fishing industry?		
<b>Feasibility</b>		

Are the objectives clearly specified, and are they consistent with the planned project outputs/benefits?		
Sound methodology: Is the project design/method well described, and is it consistent with the project's objectives?		
Likelihood of success: Are the project objectives likely to be achieved?		
Is there a strategy for managing data arising from the project so that it will be easily accessible by others in the future?		
Applicant's expertise/experience. Does the research team have the ability, capacity and track record to deliver the outputs?		
<b>Total score</b>		

### Further Guidance on the Submission and Acceptance of SC Papers

All papers submitted to the SC should meet at least one of the core criteria included in **Table 1**.

**Table 1.** Topics of papers matching the functions of the Scientific Committee

SC Function	Matching Paper Topics
(a) Recommend a research plan, identify data needs, and coordinate activities	Papers proposing research plans, identifying specific scientific or data gaps, or proposing the coordination of research activities to meet WCPFC needs.
(b) Review scientific assessments and analyses	Papers critically reviewing stock assessments, risk analyses, scientific methodologies, or peer-reviewed research related to WCPFC species and fisheries.
(c) Promote cooperation in scientific research	Papers proposing or reporting cooperative research initiatives, regional partnerships, or data-sharing mechanisms to improve knowledge on migratory stocks and ecosystems.
(d) Review results of research and analyses	Papers presenting original research results, new analyses, or updated scientific findings on target stocks, bycatch species, associated species, or ecosystems in the Convention Area.
(e) Report findings on stock status	Papers reporting on the status, trends, or health of stocks, non-target species, or ecosystems, including stock assessments, ecosystem condition reports, and biological reference points.
(f) Recommend observer programme priorities and assess outcomes	Papers evaluating or recommending improvements to the regional observer programme, especially regarding scientific data collection, program performance, and emerging monitoring technologies.
(g) Make reports and recommendations to the Commission	Papers providing science-based recommendations for conservation and management measures or future scientific work, including advice on CMMs or new management strategies.
(h) Perform other assigned tasks	Papers responding to specific Commission requests, such as on electronic reporting and monitoring, capacity-building needs, emerging issues (e.g., climate change impacts), or technical workshops.

All papers should also take into consideration the following general WCPFC rules of practice:

- **Scientific quality:** Scientific quality requires that papers employ scientifically valid methods, conduct robust analyses, and draw logical, evidence-based conclusions. Submissions must present transparent data sources that comply with WCPFC Data Rules and Procedures. Emphasis should remain on genuine scientific inquiry, avoiding advocacy, lobbying, or commercial promotion. Furthermore, any proposed conservation or management advice must be firmly grounded in objective scientific evidence rather than personal opinion.
- **Data relevance and currency:** Papers must be based on recent or relevant data that directly informs Commission decision-making. Historical analyses are acceptable provided their relevance to current issues is clearly justified and explained. Relevance and timeliness are essential to

ensure the Commission works with the best available information.

- **Strategic relevance:** Submissions should align with current WCPFC scientific priorities. These include alignment with the Scientific Committee workplan, various research plans adopted, and the review cycles of CMMs. Strategic relevance ensures that papers contribute meaningfully to the Commission's agreed scientific and management agenda.
- **Novelty and value:** Papers should offer genuine novelty and added value to the Commission's knowledge base. Submissions must avoid unnecessary duplication of recent work unless they provide updated information, expanded analysis, or new scientific insights that advance understanding or management strategies.

**The following guidance is provided for SC Theme Convenors in the evaluation of paper acceptance:**

A submitted paper should not be accepted if:

- It does not relate to stock status, fisheries research, bycatch/ecosystem science, observer programs, or other science mandated by the WCPFC.
- It lacks scientific rigor (e.g., poor methods, anecdotal conclusions).
- It advocates policy without a scientific basis (pure political statements).
- It duplicates recent or concurrent work without adding new value.
- It is commercially promotional (e.g., promoting a fishing product or method without peer-reviewed evidence).

Table 1: Example checklist for the evaluation of paper submission

No.	Question	YES	NO
1	Does the paper clearly relate to the Scientific Committee's functions under Article 12 of the WCPFC Convention? (e.g., stock assessment, bycatch, ecosystem, observer program, scientific research plan)		
2	Does the paper present scientifically valid methods, data analysis, and conclusions?		
3	Is the paper based on recent or relevant data that can inform current Commission decisions? (unless historical analysis is justified)		
4	Does the paper propose, review, or support conservation and management recommendations or scientific research relevant to WCPFC priorities?		
5	Is the data source transparent and compliant with WCPFC Data Rules and Procedures?		
6	Is the primary purpose of the paper scientific (not advocacy, policy lobbying, or commercial promotion)?		
7	Does the paper align with topics listed in the SC Work Plan, Research Plan, or CMM review cycles?		
8	If the paper proposes management advice, is it based on objective scientific evidence rather than opinion only?		
9	Does the paper avoid duplicating other recent work unless it provides new insights or updates?		
10	Is the paper properly classified (working paper, information paper, etc.) following SC submission guidelines?		



**Western and  
Central Pacific  
Fisheries  
Commission**

**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE  
TWENTIETH REGULAR SESSION**

Manila, Philippines  
14 – 21 August 2024

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**Guidelines for the Development of Scientific Committee Recommendations**

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**WCPFC-SC20-2024/GN-IP-04**

**Prepared by the Secretariat and SC officers**

These guidelines aim to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Scientific Committee's (SC) work, ensuring that SC recommendations serve their intended purpose and facilitate the Commission's decision-making process. While many of these guidelines are not new, they compile existing practices, refine them, and formulate them into structured guidelines applicable across all agenda items.

Supported by the outcomes of Project 113b<sup>2</sup> ([SC20-SA-WP-10](#)) which produced a template for reporting outcomes of stock assessments, these guidelines will remain a living document and will be updated as necessary to reflect best practices established in future meetings. They are intended to enhance SC's work by supporting greater clarity, efficiency, and relevance in its outcomes and advice to the Commission. The guidelines and stock assessment reporting template collectively support consistency across SC decisions, advice/recommendations, and requested actions. Feedback or suggestions on these guidelines or the associated reporting template (Project 113b) are welcomed.

For recommendations on the SC work program and budget to the Commission, all project proposals should include detailed terms of reference, including objectives, rationale/background, assumptions, scope of work, data requirements (public data, non-public domain data, etc.), time frame, budget details, and references, for SC review and priority ranking.

**1. Decisions Taken, Recommendations/Advice Provided, or Actions Requested:**

All agreed-upon points can be indicated in bold font. Agreed points from the SC can be categorized as follows:

**a. Decisions Taken**

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<sup>2</sup> Reporting WCPFC SC Status and Management Advice: Findings and Recommendations from WCPFC Project 113b

Summarized agreed points or conclusions reached by the SC that require actions within the SC (primarily for future SC meetings), including any prioritized requests to the SSP where the Commission's approval is not required.

Examples:

- "SC agreed that for future SC meetings, SC will ..."
- "SC agreed that in future analyses, the SSP conduct/use... (e.g., use the 5-region model instead of the 8-region model in stock assessment)"
- "SC requested that the SSP conduct further analyses and provide updates to SCXX....."

#### **b. *Advice or Recommendations Provided***

Detailed and specific advice or recommendations agreed upon by the SC, where the Commission's action/feedback is required. All advice/recommendations text should have sufficient context to support decision-making needed for the Commission, other subsidiary bodies, or SC the following year.

These include SC's responses to specific requests from the Commission or actions/directions requested to the Commission (e.g., advice to amend a CMM based on scientific evidence provided). Any advice/recommendations should specify what is being advised or recommended, the recipients (e.g., SSP, Commission, subsidiary bodies, IWGs), the specific actions or feedback requested, and any associated deadlines or timelines.

#### **c. *Actions requested***

As needed, the SC develops a summary table of agreed points that require actions or feedback from the Commission or the SSP.

### **2. Information for the Commission's awareness**

The text in the Recommendations section should be distinct from those in the Discussions section (i.e., report text summarizing interventions). It should include only the SC agreed-upon points that require the Commission's action/feedback. As much as possible, the Recommendations section should avoid the expressions "SC noted..." or "SC recommended the Commission note...", for the Commission's awareness. However, if needed, relevant "noted" information can be included under the "Recommendations" section but will not be highlighted in bold.

### **3. Stock Assessment Theme Recommendations**

The adopted structure and formality of the stock status and management advice<sup>3</sup> will apply to developing future stock assessment theme recommendations.

### **4. Verb Tense and Terminology**

All decisions made or changes implemented should be written in the past tense. The terms "agreed" or "adopted" should denote decision points.

### **5. Consistency in Formatting**

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to Attachment F, SC20 Summary Report (or Attachment 1 in [WCPFC21-2024-09\(Rev.01\)](#))

To support the Rapporteur as well as consistency in SC's presentation of outcomes, the Theme convenors should apply the same format to all draft decisions, advice or recommendations, and requested actions across all themes to ensure clarity and ease of understanding.

## **6. SC Review and Adoption Process**

The theme convenors, the SC Chair, and the Secretariat will formulate all draft decisions, advice or recommendations, and requested actions for review and adoption by the SC plenary.

The process during SC is as follows:

- a. Theme convenors, the SC Chair, and/or the Secretariat will formulate draft decisions, advice or recommendations, and requested actions and post them on the meeting webpage for review by CCMs and Observers;
- b. CCMs and Observers will provide their inputs in track-changes (one comment file per delegation) to the convenors, the SC Chair, and/or the Secretariat by email;
- c. Theme convenors, the SC Chair, and/or the Secretariat will reflect comments as appropriate and produce final draft recommendations for clearance at the SC plenary; and
- d. The SC will formally adopt all recommendations during the SC plenary.

## **7. SC Outcomes Document**

The Outcomes Document, which includes all decisions, advice or recommendations, and requested actions, will be adopted before the close of the SC meeting and posted on the website shortly thereafter (within seven working days after the end of the meeting).