



Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE TWENTY-FIRST REGULAR SESSION

Nuku'alofa, Tonga
13 – 21 August 2025

HEADS OF DELEGATION MEETING PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Tonga High School Indoor Stadium, 16:00-1700, Tuesday, 12 August 2025

WCPFC-SC21-2025-08 (Rev.02)

1. Meeting Arrangements

- 1) **SC21 registration:**
 - During the HOD meeting on Tuesday, 12 August 2025
 - From 7:30 am on Wednesday, 13 August 2025.
- 2) **Breakout room:** Only one breakout room available, with no Zoom facility
- 3) The meeting starts at 08:30 every day.
 - Tea breaks: 10:00-10:30 and 15:00-15:30 (on 13 August, morning tea will be 10:00–10:20)
 - Lunch break: 12:00-13:30.
- 4) Meeting information
 - Refer to the [SC21 Meeting Notice](#)
 - Provisional Agenda – **Attachment 1**
 - Indicative schedule – **Attachment 2**
 - Evening session (17:30-18:30):
 - JTF Steering Committee meeting: Thursday, 14 August
 - SC21 Function: Friday, 15 August

2. Opening Ceremony

| Time | Key Activity |
|----------------|---|
| 7:30 – 8:30 am | Arrival and Registration of SC participant and guest |
| 8:30 – 8:50 | Special Performance (Tupou Tertiary Institute Choir) |
| 9:00 am | Arrival of Guest of Honor – His Royal Highness Crown Prince Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala - TBC |
| 9:05 am | Welcome – MC |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| 9:05 – 9:10 am | Opening Prayer Rev. Semisi Fonua – President of the Free Church of Tonga |
| 9:10 – 9:30 am | OPENING STATEMENTS 1. WCPFC Chair – Dr. Josie Tamate 2. SC Chair – Ms. Emily Crigler 3. WCPFC Executive Director – Ms Rhea Moss-Christian |
| 9:30 – 9:40 am | Special Traditional Item (Tupou Tertiary Institute Choir) |
| 9:40 – 9:45 am | OFFICIAL OPENING SPEECH Guest of Honor – HRH Crown Prince Tupouto’a ‘Ulukalala |
| 9:45 – 9:50 am | Vote of Thanks (CEO or Minister for Ministry of Fisheries – Dr. Matoto or Dr Eke) |
| 9:50 am | Closing Prayer Rev Semisi Fonua |
| 9:50 – 10:00 am | Group Photo in the meeting room Morning Break (10:00 – 10:20) |

3. Introduction of IT-related facilities for SC21

- 1) Presentation
 - a) Submission of presentations – All presenters are requested to submit their presentation files to SC21@wcpfc.int no later than one day before their scheduled presentation.
 - b) In-person participants: All in-person presenters must use the designated presentation laptop located at the head table.
 - c) Online participants – All online presenters should use the Zoom screen sharing function to deliver their presentations. For technical assistance, please contact ITSupport@wcpfc.int in advance.
- 2) Refer to the **More Information** section on the [SC21 Website](#) for the latest updates on meeting arrangements.
- 3) Refer to the **Activity Feed** for updates to meeting documents.
- 4) Refer to the enforced "**SEARCH THIS MEETING**" feature on the [SC21 Website](#), which allows users to search for specific terms within PDF documents, either within the current meeting or across SC all meetings.

4. Guidelines on the use of the Online Discussion Forum (ODF) in 2025 – will be closed at noon on Sunday, 17 August

The following guidelines are proposed for using the ODF in support of SC21:

- 1) The ODF will be accessible to all registered and approved SC21 participants.
- 2) Commission-funded SC projects will be posted on the ODF. Their outputs may be briefly reviewed, as necessary, under Agenda Item 10 (SC Work Program and Budget) for finalization or continuation, subject to members' comments.
- 3) Stock assessment papers will be made available on the ODF to facilitate technical discussions on aspects of the assessments. This will allow the SC plenary to focus on higher-level issues. Technical questions may be raised on the ODF, with authors

responding either on the forum or during the SC plenary, depending on the nature of the inquiry.

- 4) Other information papers may also be posted on the ODF upon request by the authors seeking feedback, or by the SC Chair/Vice-Chair or theme convenors who wish to include papers that could not be covered during their sessions due to time constraints. Authors are expected to respond to comments or questions as appropriate.
- 5) After the closure of the ODF, a summary of ODF communications will be prepared and noted under the agenda item "Other Matters." Any necessary follow-up will be taken under relevant agenda items.
- 6) To facilitate efficient Q&A, all participants are asked to prefix their input as follows:
 - COMMENT: My comment on section 3.5 of the paper SC21-GN-IP-01 is ...
 - QUESTION: My question on section 3.5 of the paper SC21-GN-IP-01 is ...
- 7) Other issues?

5. Review of Provisional Agenda

- 1) Provisional (Annotated) Agenda – No supplementary agenda items were requested 30 days before the start of the meeting; therefore, the provisional agenda is assumed to be adopted.
- 2) Two Steering Committee meetings for the PMSB and PTPP projects were convened on 29 July. Presentation files were posted on the SC21 website, under the Presentation folder.
- 3) Agenda Item 12 – Other Matters
 - Any minor issues raised here at the HOD meeting or under Agenda Item 1.4 (*Adoption of the Agenda*) will be discussed under *Agenda Item 12 Other Matters*.

6. SC Officers and Theme Conveners

- 1) Current SC officers and theme conveners are listed below.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| SC Chair | Emily Crigler: emily.crigler@noaa.gov |
| SC Vice-Chair | Vacant |
| ST Theme | Valerie Post: valerie.post@noaa.gov |
| SA Theme | Hidetada Kiyofuji: hkiyofuji@affrc.go.jp |
| | Berry Muller: bmuller@mimra.com |
| | Michelle Sculley: michelle.sculley@noaa.gov |
| MI Theme | Shuya Nakatsuka: nakatsuka_shuya49@fra.go.jp |
| EB Theme | Yonat Swimmer: yonat.swimmer@noaa.gov – to be replaced |
| | Leyla Knittweis: Leyla.Knittweis@mpi.govt.nz – to be confirmed |

- 2) Secretariat's Science Team
 - Science Manager – SungKwon Soh sungkwon.soh@wcpfc.int
 - Assistant Science Manager – Elaine Garvilles Elaine.Garvilles@wcpfc.int

7. Reporting arrangements

- 1) **Lead rapporteur:** Mark Smaalders (marksmaalders@gmail.com) will work online.
- 2) **Theme convenors**
 - Theme convenors are responsible for drafting their theme recommendations.
- 3) **Document Control**
 - a) All new or revised meeting documents, presentation files, ISG reports, agreed recommendations, and decision points should be emailed to SC21@wcpfc.int.
 - Presenters may also upload their presentation files directly to the presentation laptop, with assistance from the Secretariat if needed.
 - b) For **lengthy interventions**, please email the text to the *relevant Theme Convenors* and the *Lead Rapporteur* (marksmaalders@gmail.com).
 - c) Presentation laptop: Folders will be organized and managed by the Science Manager and Assistant Science Manager.
- 4) **SC21 Summary Report**
 - a) The lead rapporteur will produce a draft Summary Report by **10 September**, which will be posted on the SC21 website for CCMs' and Observers' review.
 - b) Before posting, the Secretariat will coordinate that all theme convenors have a chance to review their final draft theme reports from the lead rapporteur.
 - c) Once all CCMs' and Observers' comments are reflected and cleared, the Summary Report is considered adopted intersessionally.
 - d) The tentative schedule for finalizing the SC21 Summary Report:

| Tentative Schedule | Actions to be taken |
|------------------------------|---|
| 21 August | Close of SC21 |
| By 1 September | The SC21 Outcomes Document will be posted on the SC21 website within seven (7) working days, following the Rules of Procedure. |
| By 10 September | The Secretariat will receive a DRAFT Summary Report from the Lead Rapporteur, which will also be posted on the SC21 website. |
| By 22 October | CCMs and Observers will be invited to submit any comments or proposed changes (using the track changes function). |
| By the end of October | The adopted Summary Report will be posted intersessionally . |

Rule 33

1. *Summary reports of the sessions of the Commission shall be maintained in such form as the Commission shall decide. As a general rule, such reports shall be circulated as soon as possible, to all representatives, who shall inform the Secretariat within thirty working days after the circulation of the summary report of any changes they wish to have made.*

2. *The Executive Director shall communicate the text of all decisions adopted by the Commission pursuant to article 20 of the Convention to all members of the Commission and to each territory referred to in article 43 of the Convention, and to observers referred to in rule 36, within seven working days following the adoption of such decision.*

8. Side meetings

- To be arranged if requested

9. Informal Small Group (ISG) meetings

- A draft list of the SC21 Informal Small Groups (ISGs) is provided below. HODs will review and finalize this list and assign the corresponding ISG facilitators. Facilitators will lead their respective ISG meetings, determine the schedules and approaches, and provide a report on the ISG outcomes to the relevant theme convenors and the Secretariat for posting. They will also present their reports to the plenary.

List of ISGs

| ISG-ID | Title/TOR | Agenda | Coordinator/ Facilitator |
|--------------------------|---|---------|-------------------------------------|
| ISG-01 (TARP) | SC21-SA-IP-17. G Pilling, P. Hamer and S. Nicol. Tuna Assessment Research Plan (TARP) for 'Key' Tuna Species Assessments in the WCPO, 2025-2028 | 4.7.6.1 | P. Hamer/ Berry Muller |
| ISG-02 (BRP) | SC21-SA-IP-18. S Brouwer and P. Hamer. Progress against the 2023-2030 Billfish Research Plan - 2025 | 4.7.6.2 | S. Brouwer/ Kiyofuji Hidetada |
| ISG-03 (SRP) | SC21-SA-IP-19. S Brouwer and P. Hamer. Progress against the 2021-2030 Shark Research Plan - 2025 | 4.7.6.3 | S. Brouwer/ Michelle Sculley |
| ISG-04 (Seabirds) | Review of CMM for Seabirds (CMM2018-03) | 6.4 | I. Debski / H. Benko (NZ) |
| ISG-05 (Size data) | SC21-ST-WP-02 P. Hamer. Review and reconciliation of size data collected in the WCPFC-CA for stock assessment purposes (WCPFC Project: 127) | 3.1.2 | P. Hamer/ Valerie Post |
| ISG-06 (Cannery data) | SC21-ST-WP-04 T. Vidal. Project 114 Update: Progress in improving Cannery Receipt Data for WCPFC scientific work | 3.1.5 | T.Vidal / Emily Crigler |
| ISG-07 (SA software) | SC21-SA-WP-01. A. Magnusson, N. Davies, G. Pilling, and P. Hamer. Project 123: Scoping the next generation of tuna stock assessment software | 4.1.2 | A. Magnusson/ Mark Fitchett |

ISG Schedule

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | | | Wed, 13 | Thu, 14 | Fri, 15 | Sat, 16 |
|--|--|--|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| AM (0.5h) | | | | | | | |
| Lunch (1h) | | | | | | | |
| PM (0.5h) | | | | | | | |
| Evening | | | | | | | |

| | Sun, 17 | Mon, 18 | Tue, 19 | Wed, 20 | Thu, 21 | | |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--|--|
| AM (0.5h) | | | | | | | |
| Lunch (1h) | | | | | | | |
| PM (0.5h) | | | | | | | |
| Evening | | | | | | | |

10. Next meeting venue

- 1) SC22 in 2026: Samoa, 12 (Wed.) – 20 (Thu.) August 2026
- 2) SC23 in 2027: TBD

11. Other Matters



Nuku'alofa, Tonga
13 – 21 August 2025

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

WCPFC-SC21-2025-03 (Rev.01)

AGENDA ITEM 1 OPENING OF THE MEETING

- 1.1 Welcome address
- 1.2 Meeting arrangements
- 1.3 Issues arising from the Commission
- 1.4 Adoption of the agenda
- 1.5 Reporting arrangements
- 1.6 Intersessional activities of the Scientific Committee

AGENDA ITEM 2 REVIEW OF FISHERIES

- 2.1 Overview of Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) fisheries
- 2.2 Overview of Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) fisheries
- 2.3 Annual Report – Part 1 from Members, Cooperating Non-Members, and Participating Territories
- 2.4 Reports from regional fisheries bodies and other organizations

AGENDA ITEM 3 DATA AND STATISTICS THEME

- 3.1 Data gaps of the Commission
 - 3.1.1 Report on the WCPFC scientific data
 - 3.1.2 Reconciliation of size composition data for stock assessments (Project 127)
 - 3.1.3 Improving operational data evaluation and submission standards
 - 3.1.4 Better data on fish weights and lengths for scientific analyses (Project 90)
 - 3.1.5 Improved coverage of cannery receipt data (Project 114)
 - 3.1.6 Minimum data reporting requirements
 - 3.1.6 Proposal on sea turtle data reporting requirements for fishing operations
 - 3.1.7 Development of a FAD Logbook
 - 3.1.8 Reporting requirements for cetacean interaction
 - 3.1.9 Bycatch estimates of the longline fishery
- 3.2 Further analysis of purse seine fishing behavior, reporting, and effort estimation
- 3.3 Regional Observer Programme

- 3.3.1 ROP Data Issues**
- 3.3.2 Training observers for elasmobranch biological sampling (Project 109)**
- 3.4 Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring**
- 3.5 Fisheries and Resources Monitoring Systems (FIRMS) Partnership**
- 3.6 Other ST issues**

AGENDA ITEM 4 STOCK ASSESSMENT THEME

- 4.1 Improvement of MULTIFAN-CL software**
 - 4.1.1 Update of MULTIFAN-CL software**
 - 4.1.2 Scoping the next generation of tuna stock assessment software (Project 123)**
- 4.2 Template for reporting stock assessment outcomes (Project 113b)**
- 4.3 WCPO Tunas**
 - 4.3.1 WCPO skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*)**
 - 4.3.1.1 Skipjack stock assessment
 - 4.3.1.2 Provision of scientific information to the Commission
 - a. Stock assessment and trends
 - b. Stock status
 - c. Management advice
 - 4.3.2 Other WCPO tunas**
 - 4.3.2.1 Indicator analysis
 - 4.3.2.2 Updated reproductive biology of tropical tunas (Project 120)
- 4.4 Northern stocks**
 - 4.4.1 Provision of scientific information from the ISC**
 - 4.4.2 Pacific bluefin tuna (*Thunnus orientalis*)**
 - 4.4.2.1 Research on migratory patterns
- 4.5 Billfish**
 - 4.5.1 Southwest Pacific swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*)**
 - 4.5.1.1 Stock assessment of Southwest Pacific swordfish
 - 4.5.1.2 Provision of scientific information to the Commission
 - a. Stock assessment and trends
 - b. Stock status
 - c. Management advice
 - 4.5.2 Southwest Pacific striped marlin (*Kajikia audax*)**
 - 4.5.2.1 Stock assessment of Southwest Pacific striped marlin
 - 4.5.2.2 Provision of scientific information to the Commission
- 4.6 Sharks**
 - 4.6.1 Oceanic whitetip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*)**
 - 4.6.1.1 Oceanic whitetip shark stock assessment (Project 124)
 - 4.6.1.2 Provision of scientific information to the Commission
 - a. Stock assessment and trends
 - b. Stock status
 - c. Management advice
- 4.7 Projects and Requests**
 - 4.7.1 Application of Close-Kin-Mark-Recapture methods (Project 100c)**
 - 4.7.2 Longline effort creep and CPUE index collaboration across Tuna-RFMOs (Project 122a)**
 - 4.7.3 Biology from billfish in longline fisheries (Project 125)**
 - 4.7.4 Developing sampling strategy for sharks (Project 126)**

- 4.7.5 Stock connectivity scoping study (Project 128)**
- 4.7.6 Research Plan Update**
 - 4.7.6.1 Tuna Assessment Research Plan (2023 – 2026) annual update
 - 4.7.6.2 Billfish Research Plan (2023 – 2030) annual update
 - 4.7.6.3 Shark Research Plan 2021-2030 annual updates
 - 4.7.6.4 WCPFC tuna biological sampling plan (Project 117)
 - 4.7.6.5 WCPFC billfish biological sampling plan (Project 118)
- 4.8 Other SA issues**

AGENDA ITEM 5 MANAGEMENT ISSUES THEME

- 5.1 Development of the WCPFC harvest strategy framework for key tuna species**
 - 5.1.1 Skipjack tuna**
 - 5.1.1.1 Skipjack tuna management procedure
 - 5.1.1.2 Monitoring strategy for skipjack tuna
 - 5.1.2 South Pacific albacore tuna**
 - 5.1.2.1 South Pacific albacore management procedure
 - 5.1.2.2 Joint WCPFC/IATTC Working Group for South Pacific Albacore
 - 5.1.2.3 Updates on SP Albacore Roadmap IWG
 - 5.1.3 Bigeye tuna**
 - 5.1.3.1 Bigeye operating models
 - 5.1.3.2 Bigeye management procedure – design
 - 5.1.3.3 Bigeye Target Reference Points and Performance Evaluation of Candidate Management Procedures
 - 5.1.4 Mixed fishery MSE framework**
 - 5.1.5 Progress of the WCPFC Harvest Strategy Work Plan**
- 5.2 Pacific bluefin tuna management strategy evaluation**
- 5.3 Southwest Pacific striped marlin – management projections**
- 5.4 North Pacific striped marlin projections**
- 5.5 Southwest Pacific swordfish management procedure**
- 5.6 Review of effectiveness of CMM 2023-01**
- 5.7 Other MI issues**

AGENDA ITEM 6 ECOSYSTEM AND BYCATCH MITIGATION THEME

- 6.1 Ecosystem and Climate Indicators**
 - 6.1.1 Ecosystem and Climate Indicator Report Card**
 - 6.1.2 Climate change**
 - 6.1.2.1 Climate Change Workplan
 - 6.1.2.2 CMM climate change vulnerability assessment
 - 6.1.3 Updates on the 2019 SEAPODYM Review**
- 6.2 FAD impacts**
 - 6.2.1 Research on non-entangling and biodegradable FADs**
 - 6.2.2 Research on dFAD loss and abandonments**
 - 6.2.3 Updates on FAD Management Options IWG**
- 6.3 Bycatch management**
 - 6.3.1 Bycatch Management Information System**
 - 6.3.2 Bycatch Assessment and Management**

- 6.4 Review of CMM for Seabirds (CMM 2018-03)
- 6.5 Elasmobranchs
- 6.5.1 Review of CMM for sharks (CMM 2024-05)
- 6.6 Cetaceans
- 6.7 Deep-sea mining
- 6.8 Other EB issues

AGENDA ITEM 7 OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS

- 7.1 Pacific Marine Specimen Bank (Project 35b)
- 7.2 Pacific Tuna Tagging Project (Project 42)
- 7.3 West Pacific East Asia Project
- 7.4 Japan Trust Fund activities
- 7.5 Other Projects

AGENDA ITEM 8 COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

AGENDA ITEM 9 SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS OF DEVELOPING STATES AND PARTICIPATING TERRITORIES

AGENDA ITEM 10 FUTURE WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET

- 10.1 Development of the 2026 work program and budget, and projection of 2027-2028 provisional work program and indicative budget

AGENDA ITEM 11 ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

- 11.1 Future operation of the Scientific Committee
 - 11.1.1 Guidelines and process improvements
 - 11.1.2 Policy of SC meeting duration
- 11.2 Election of Officers of the Scientific Committee
- 11.3 Next meeting

AGENDA ITEM 12 OTHER MATTERS

AGENDA ITEM 13 ADOPTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT OF THE TWENTIETH REGULAR SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM 14 CLOSE OF THE MEETING

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
TWENTY-FIRST REGULAR SESSION
Nuku'alofa, Tonga
13 – 21 August 2025

INDICATIVE SCHEDULE (Matrix) – [Opening Ceremony Schedule is annexed](#)

WCPFC-SC21-2025/05 (Rev.01)

| Time | Sun | Mon | Tue, 12 August | Wed, 13 | Thu, 14 | Fri, 15 | Sat, 16 |
|------------------|-----|-----|---|--|--|--|--|
| 0830-1000 (1.5h) | | | | Opening Ceremony 0830-1000 | A4. Stock Status(1) A4.1 (MFCL) A4.2 (P123) A4.7.6.1→ISG A4.7.6.2→ISG A4.7.6.3→ISG | A4. Stock Status(3) A4.3.2 (Other tunas) A4.4 (Northern stocks) | A4. Stock Status(5) A4.5.2 (SWP MLS) |
| 1000-1030 | | | | 1000-1020 | Morning Break (1000-1030) | | |
| 1030-1200 (1.5h) | | | | Agenda 1 and A2 (1020-1220) | A4. Stock Status(2) A4.3.1 (SKJ) | A4. Stock Status(4) A4.5.1 (swordfish) | A4. Stock Status(6) A4.6 (Sharks) |
| 1200-1330 | | | 14:00- 15:30 Chair and Conveners Meeting | Lunch (1220-1330) | Lunch Break (1200-1330) | | |
| 1330-1500 (1.5h) | | | | A3. Data (1) | A6. EB theme (1) | A5. MI theme (1) | A5. MI theme (2) |
| 1500-1530 | | | | Afternoon Break (1500-1530) | | | |
| 1530-1730 (2h) | | | 16:00 –17:00 HOD Meeting | A3. Data (2) (1530-1750) | A6. EB theme (2) | A6. EB theme (3) A3. Data (3) | A5. MI theme (3) |
| 1730-1830 | | | | | JTF (1730-1830) | | |

| Time | Sun, 17 | Mon, 18 | Tue, 19 | Wed, 20 | Thu, 21 | | |
|------------------|---------|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| 0830-1000 (1.5h) | | A4. Stock Status (7) A4.7 (Projects) | A4. Stock Status (9) Recommendation | A4. Stock Status (10) Recommendation | A4. Stock Status (12) Recommendation | | |
| 1000-1030 | | Morning Break (1000-1030) | | | | | |
| 1030-1200 (1.5h) | | A3. Data (4) Recommendations | A5. MI theme (5) Recommendations | A4. Stock Status (11) Recommendation | A4. Stock Status (13) Recommendation | | |
| 1200-1330 | | Lunch Break (1200-1330) | | | | | |
| 1330-1500 (1.5h) | | A3. Data (5) Recommendations | A6. EB theme (4) Recommendations | A6. EB theme (5) Recommendations | A6. EB theme (6) Recommendations | | |
| | | A5. MI theme (4) Recommendations | | | A5. MI theme (6) Recommendations | | |
| 1500-1530 | | Afternoon Break (1500-1530) | | | | | |
| 1530-1730 (2h) | | A4. Stock Status (8) A4.7 (Projects) A7.2 (PTTP; 10min) | Agenda 7-12 | Agenda 7-12 | Agenda 7-14 | | |
| 1730-1830 | | | | | | | |