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**Cooperating Non-Member Requests for 2026**

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**WCPFC22-2025-06**  
**22 October 2025**

**Submitted by the Secretariat**

**Purpose**

1. This paper provides information to support the Commission's consideration of applications for Cooperating Non-Member (CNM) status for 2026.

**Background**

2. The Conservation and Management Measure on Cooperating Non-Members ([CMM 2019-01](#)) prescribes a two-step process for how the Commission considers and decides on requests for CNM status. The two-step procedure for this decision-making process is illustrated in **Attachment A**. The Commission decisions on applications for 2025, as adopted at WCPFC21, are contained in **Attachment B**, for reference.
3. On 15 January 2025, the Executive Director sent letters to all 2025 CNM applicants confirming the successful outcome of their applications following consideration by WCPFC21. The letters outlined each CNM's approved participatory rights, confirmed their financial contributions for 2025, and noted any relevant compliance issues arising from the 2024 Compliance Monitoring Report. The correspondence also provided guidance on the process and timeline for submitting CNM applications for 2026. These letters, along with related communications and supporting documents, are accessible to authorized users through the secure CCM Portal under [2025 Cooperating Non-Member Applications | WCPFC](#).

**Requests for Cooperating Non-Member status in 2026**

4. The Secretariat received eight applications for CNM status in 2026. All eight applications were renewals from CNMs in 2025 and were submitted by the Bahamas, Curaçao, Ecuador, El Salvador, Liberia, Panama, Thailand and Viet Nam, in accordance with paragraph 1 of [CMM 2019-01](#). This information is available at [2025 Cooperating Non-Member Applications | WCPFC](#).
5. **Table 1** provides information on the payment of financial contributions for 2024 and 2025 as of 22 October 2025. As of that date, all CNMs have paid their 2025 contributions in full.

**Table 1: Financial contributions from CNMs for 2024 and 2025 as of 10 October 2025**

Cooperating Non-Member	2024 assessed financial contribution	2024 payments	2025 assessed financial contribution	2025 payments
Bahamas	N/A	N/A	41,456	41,456
Curacao	29,576	29,501	31,933	31,933
Ecuador	51,908	51,908	57,864	57,864
El Salvador	26,649	26,649	29,719	29,701
Liberia	N/A	N/A	17,762	17,762
Panama	26,807	26,807	30,593	30,650
Thailand	23,162	23,162	26,112	26,112
Vietnam	20,235	20,235	22,686	22,686

### Outcomes from the TCC21 review of applications and next steps

6. TCC21 reviewed the applications for CNM status for 2026 and provided recommendations to WCPFC22, which are summarized in the [TCC21 2025 Outcomes](#) and presented in **Table 2** below. On 13 October 2025, the Secretariat sent letters to all CNM applicants for 2026, providing information on the outcomes and recommendations from TCC21. For relevant CNMs, the letters also specified the deadline for submitting additional information to address any remaining issues identified in the 2025 draft Compliance Monitoring Report (CMR) reviewed at TCC21.
7. Any letters or documents received in relation to TCC21 recommendations on CNM applications will be included in the WCPFC22 documentation, available through the [2025 Cooperating Non-Member Applications | WCPFC webpage](#). Access to historical Compliance Monitoring Reports, which includes CNMs, are available through [Final CMR | WCPFC webpage](#).
8. Consistent with past Commission practice, it is expected that a small working group will be convened during WCPFC22 to assist in preparing draft decisions for the Commission's consideration. These decisions will likely include the review of CNM participatory rights and address any issues or recommendations arising from discussions at TCC21.

**Table 2: TCC21 Recommendations to WCPFC22:** (see [TCC21 2025 Outcomes](#))

7. TCC21 provides the following recommendations and technical advice to WCPFC22 on Cooperating Non-Member (CNM) requests:

a) TCC21 reviewed the following eight applications for CNM status and is forwarding them to WCPFC22 for consideration: Bahamas, Curacao, Ecuador, El Salvador, Liberia, Panama, Thailand, and Vietnam.

b) TCC21 reminded CNM applicants of the obligations included in *CMM 2019-01*, particularly paragraph 3 and paragraph 11(a), which states that CNMs shall “comply with all conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission.” It was noted that compliance issues of some applicants were pointed out during the CMR process and that there would be further discussions leading up to the WCPFC22 meeting where further considerations will be given to the applications in relation with the compliance status of each applicant.

c) TCC21 noted that some required information, such as compliance and data submission status, etc., had not been provided in the cases of some applications. These are:

- Curacao: transshipment data
- El Salvador and Ecuador: responses to VMS audit points
- Viet Nam: comments on compliance record (para. 3(b) and para. 11(a) of CMM 2019-01)

TCC21 requested that those applicants provide such missing information during the TCC21 meeting to the extent possible or within 21 days after TCC21.

It was noted that Curacao and Viet Nam provided the missing information during TCC21.

d) TCC21 also reminded CNM applicants of the importance of attendance at the TCC and Commission meeting where the applications are considered. Their attendance is essential for demonstrating their commitment to the Convention’s objectives. Furthermore, CNM applicants are obliged to provide all data required to submit in accordance with relevant conservation and management measures, as stipulated in CMM 2019-01. Failure to meet these obligations may adversely affect the consideration of their CNM applications.

e) TCC21 noted the importance of real-time VMS positions sharing of CNM vessels operating in the overlap to help deter IUU fishing. TCC21 recommends CNMs work with the Secretariat to implement VMS data sharing with WCPFC.

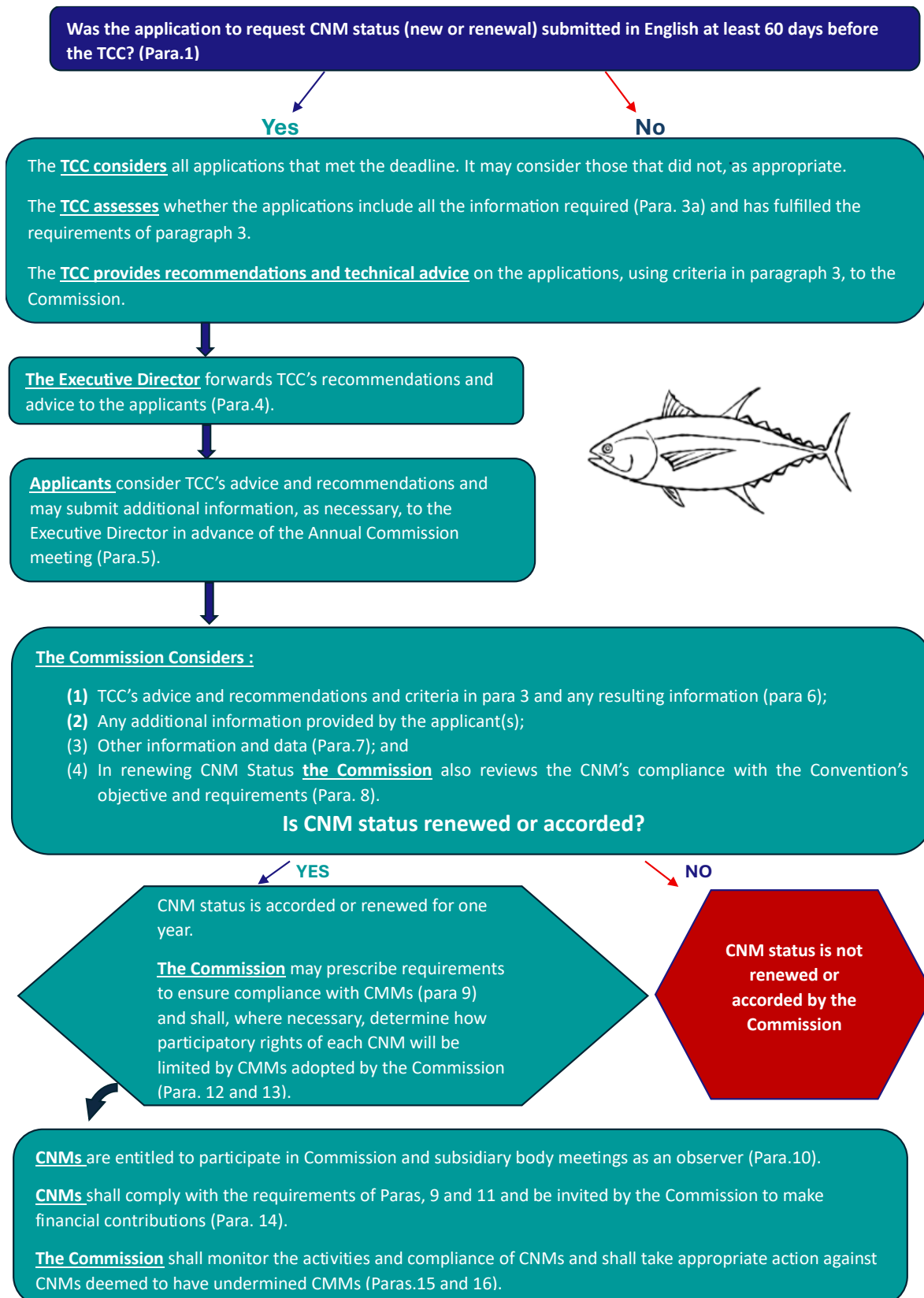
f) TCC21 noted that Bahamas, Ecuador and Liberia were not present at the meeting and requested them to clarify the reason why they were unable to attend the meeting. Those countries were invited to provide their response to the Secretariat and the CNM WG Chair.

g) TCC21 noted the usefulness of the Commission’s electronic reporting tools such as TSER (Transshipment Electronic Reporting System) and encouraged the CNM applicants to use the tool if their vessels are to tranship on the high seas.

- h) TCC21 also noted all the eight applicants' statements of commitment to ensure payment of financial contribution during the meeting. TCC21 noted that the contributions of Bahamas, Ecuador, El Salvador, Liberia, Panama, Thailand and Vietnam for 2025 were paid, confirmed by the WCPFC Secretariat during TCC21.
- i) TCC21 noted that Curacao's payment for 2025 contribution had not been made at the time of review and that Curacao would make the payment as soon as possible.
- j) TCC21 reminded that CNMs should ensure that financial contributions are paid in a timely manner.
- k) TCC21 noted the discrepancies between the intended fishing activities as shown in the application template and those that they are actually engaging in, and requested that the applicants provide updated information to the Secretariat, as appropriate, clearly indicating their intended fishing activities and the purpose of seeking CNM status.
- l) TCC21 noted that the review by TCC of all eight applications for CNM status was complete and recommends WCPFC22 consider all applicants for CNM status.

#### Recommendation

9. The Commission is invited to review CNM applications and decide each applicant's status and associated rights as a Cooperating Non-Member for 2026.



## EXCERPT FROM WCPFC21 SUMMARY REPORT: AGENDA ITEM 4 - MEMBERSHIP AND OTHER APPLICATIONS

### 4.3 Applications for Cooperating Non-Member Status

Paper: [WCPFC21-2024-05](#)

70. *The Chair invited the Secretariat to introduce working paper 05 on Applications for Cooperating Non-Member (CNM) Status for 2025. WCPFC Deputy Compliance Manager, Ms. Eidre Sharp, presented WP05 which contained TCC20's recommendations on eight CNM applications received from The Bahamas, Curaçao, Ecuador, El Salvador, Liberia, Panama, Thailand, and Vietnam. The Deputy Compliance Manager noted that there were two new applications for 2025 from entities that had previously held CNM status.*
71. *Liberia had applied for CNM status in 2024, subject to paying its 2023 financial contribution by the end of December. As that payment was received after the deadline, Liberia was not granted CNM status for 2024 but has reapplied for 2025*
72. *The Bahamas was a CNM in 2021 but withdrew partway through the year due to circumstances affecting its ability to maintain effective participation. Despite withdrawing, The Bahamas continued to meet its obligations during that period.*
73. *Korea thanked the TCC Vice-Chair for leading the CNM Small Working Group (SWG) at TCC20 and welcomed TCC20's recommendation that WCPFC21 consider all applicants for CNM status in 2025. Korea noted that one applicant had not provided an update, and that some applicants had not been present at TCC20. Korea wished to underscore the importance of both attending meetings and providing required updates.*
74. *Tuvalu, on behalf of FFA CCMs, stressed that CNMs must comply with all CMM, fulfill reporting obligations (including timely submissions), and actively participate in TCC to ensure an effective Compliance Monitoring Scheme. They noted that many CNM applicants' participatory rights largely involve carrier vessels for transshipment and emphasized the need to address this as part of the ongoing review of the transshipment measure. The CNM working group should also consider TCC20's recommendation encouraging CNMs to submit transshipment notifications and declarations electronically, utilizing the WCPFC's High Seas Transshipment Electronic Reporting System ([TSER](#)). FFA CCMs strongly urged CNMs with vessels engaging in high seas transshipment to adopt TSER, and indicated they would seek an update on this at the next TCC.*
75. *The United States highlighted the need for the Commission to discuss membership requests from several longtime CNMs—requests that were not addressed at TCC20 nor in the WCPFC21 CNM paper. The United States reiterated its view that the Commission should consider extending membership invitations in line with international fisheries cooperation instruments, emphasizing the importance of proactively responding to and meaningfully considering such requests for membership.*

76. *The EU supported the United States' comments on new membership, emphasizing the importance of a clear process for considering applications. Citing Article 8.3 of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, they highlighted that States with a genuine interest in the fishery must not be barred from membership, and any conditions must not be applied in a discriminatory manner. The EU urged the Commission to address this procedural gap for potential new members as a priority.*
77. *Japan expressed the view that if an applicant wished to become a full member, the Commission should consider and evaluate the appropriateness of such membership. Japan noted that WCPFC is an open international organization grounded in the UNFSA Convention and hoped for constructive dialogue on this issue during the week.*
78. *Nauru, on behalf of PNA and Tokelau CCMs, noted that the Convention stipulates a specific process for new Commission members: an invitation granted by consensus, reflecting the Commission's unique structure. They emphasized that over 85% of the tuna catch occurs in developing countries' waters, especially SIDS highly dependent on these resources. PNA and Tokelau CCMs believed the existing CNM process already provides sufficient avenues for other nations' participation and stated they do not support extending invitations for additional membership.*
79. *Ecuador thanked meeting participants for considering its CNM status renewal and reaffirmed its longstanding interest in becoming a full member of WCPFC. Citing decades of experience in other RFMOs—such as IATTC, SPRFMO, and CCAMLR—Ecuador emphasized its commitment to combating IUU fishing and highlighted its history of responsible practices, including zero high-seas fishing days and a small fleet of tuna purse-seine vessels. Ecuador noted its consistent fulfillment of annual financial obligations to WCPFC and believed there were no grounds to prevent membership, given its adherence to UNCLOS and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement. They also mentioned recent collaborative initiatives (e.g., MoUs with Cook Islands and Kiribati, a FAD project with French Polynesia) and requested bilateral meetings during the session to address any questions, asking the Chair to keep this agenda item open for further discussion.*
80. *El Salvador echoed Ecuador's call for equitable participation and supported the principle of inclusivity and transparency in decision-making. Emphasizing willingness to meet all Commission requirements, they reiterated their commitment to compliance with CMMs and full participation in WCPFC affairs. El Salvador urged the Commission to consider accepting new members—including El Salvador and Ecuador—consistent with international legal principles and in a manner that does not undermine the fishing rights of coastal states. They noted that doing so would strengthen cooperation, uphold coastal states' interests, and enhance the conservation and management of fisheries across the Pacific Ocean.*
81. *The Solomon Islands, on the matter of CNMs transitioning to full WCPFC membership, spoke on behalf of the FFA CCMs and reaffirmed their consistent position on the matter. They explained that the pathway to membership was clear, and that it begins with an invitation extended by consensus from the Commission. This was stipulated in Article 35.2 of the Convention and at present, no such invitations had been extended.*
82. *The Chair agreed to Ecuador's request to keep the agenda item open to allow Ecuador to consult informally throughout the meeting with other CCMs on the question of membership that it raised earlier. On revisiting this agenda item later in the meeting, Ecuador advised that it held bilateral discussions with some PNA delegates and representatives, and it was made clear to Ecuador that the*

*PNA position was not in support of allowing Ecuador or any other countries to become new members of WCPFC. Ecuador referenced the WCPF Convention Article 35.2 and its connection to UNCLOS and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and committed to continuing cooperation with the Commission.*

*Decision*

*The Commission approved the [applications](#) for CNM status for 2025 from The Bahamas, Curaçao, Ecuador, El Salvador, Liberia, Panama, Thailand, and Vietnam.*