



Virtual Meeting 3 of HSBI WG

7 August 2025 10:00 – 13:00 (Pohnpei time)

Chair's Summary Report

Issued: 8 August 2025

Agenda Item 1. Opening of Meeting

1. The third Meeting of the Voluntary HSBI Regional Guides Intersessional Process (HSBI-WG03) was held virtually on 7 August 2025, Pohnpei time. The Chair of the Voluntary HSBI Regional Guides Intersessional Process, David Power (Australia), called the meeting to order at 10:00am.
2. The Chair recognised the various participants and thanked them for their continued support and engagement in the development of draft guides. The WG adopted the agenda (Attachment 1).
3. Participants in HSBI-WG03 included representatives from Australia, Canada, China, France, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Chinese Taipei and United States, as well as FFA Secretariat, Sharks Pacific and the Secretariat. A list of participants is provided in Attachment 2.

Agenda Item 2. Introduction and Opening Remarks

4. The Chair acknowledged the contributions of all participants involved in the HSBI WG intersessional process in developing the draft Guides. Particular appreciation was extended to those who contributed directly to the Voluntary Guides, especially France, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and the European Union. Four of the five Guides have been uploaded to the meeting page, and the recently updated Bycatch Mitigation Guide will be presented on screen.
5. The Chair outlined the meeting process, indicating that the authors of the Guides will be invited to present their revisions and gather feedback from participants. Following the meeting, all CCMs and participants will have the opportunity to review and provide further comments on the Guides. These inputs will be used to update and consolidate the documents into a final draft for submission to the TCC.
6. The primary objective of this meeting is to gather feedback on the Guides developed to date, with the aim of finalising the draft documents for consideration at this year's TCC meeting.

Agenda Item 3. Discuss Draft HSBI Voluntary Regional Guides | Tools for High Seas Boarding and Inspections

3.1 Draft Voluntary guides for

3.1.1 DNA testing in HSBI - Australia

7. Australia outlined the changes made to the DNA Testing Guide ([Working Paper 2](#)) since the HSBIWG02 meeting, reflecting feedback from participants. These changes included a global update to use the term “CCMs,” the adoption of non-binding language, additions to the process in paragraph 2, a deletion in paragraph 8, amendments to paragraph 9, a reference to minimum standards, the inclusion of a suggested list of information, an expansion of the timeframe for DNA analysis, and a provision allowing for sample retesting upon request.
8. The Chair invited participants to provide feedback on [Working Paper 2](#), and noted that some participants had submitted written comments in recent days.
9. Key points raised in the discussions included:
 - Participants expressed general appreciation to Australia for their efforts in preparing the updated guide.
 - **Paragraph 12(a):** To prevent miscommunication with the vessel master, a suggestion was made to add a sentence that emphasizes the importance of having witnesses from the fishing vessel present during DNA sampling:
“Priority should be given to ensuring that witnesses from the fishing vessel are present.”
 - **Paragraph 12(f) or Paragraph 12(b):** A concern about potential confusion due to the time gap between the inspection report (provided within 3 days) and the DNA test results (provided within 5 business days). To address this, they recommended including a note in the inspection report acknowledging the pending DNA results:
“Authorised inspectors should note in the full inspection report that the DNA sampling result will be provided in due course.”
 - A concern was raised about the lack of clarity in the Guide regarding the term “DNA sampling,” specifically whether it refers to tissue collection, DNA sequencing, or DNA analysis. To address this, it was suggested that the Guide include a definition of “DNA sampling” at the beginning, followed by an explanation of the specific processes covered.
 - An overview was provided of some written suggestions submitted to Australia prior to the meeting, which included:
 - Updating language to ensure consistency with the HSBI CMM;
 - **Paragraph 8:** replacing the phrase “methods of choice”;
 - **Paragraph 12:** reordering the steps to reflect chronological order;
 - **Paragraph 12(b):** clarifying the term “location”;
 - **Paragraph 14:** proposing the inclusion of a 'chain of custody' form.

- A CCM recalled the importance of paragraph 23 of the HSBI CMM, which states that boarding and inspections should be conducted in a manner that does not interfere with lawful vessel operations or adversely affect the quality of the catch. It was noted that DNA sampling should be limited to situations where species cannot be identified visually, and that inspectors should be well trained in species identification to ensure compliance with the CMM. This CCM expressed interest in submitting specific comments to address this principle following the meeting.
- **Paragraph 12(b):** To support clarity and consistency with the HSBI CMM, the member suggested adding an item to paragraph 12(b) to include “*reasons for or background of the DNA tissue sampling.*”
- Several CCMs expressed interest in submitting further comments on the draft Guide following the meeting.

3.1.2 Use of Volumetrics Method for Estimating the Fish Quantity Onboard –France

10. The Chair thanked participants for their contributions to the development of the Guide ([Working Paper 3](#)). France provided a brief introduction to the revised version of the document, noting that it had been updated to reflect, as far as possible, the comments received from participants. France explained the context for the amendments and clarified the Guide’s role within the broader suite of WCPFC Guides, emphasizing that it is one of several voluntary guidance documents. France highlighted efforts to improve the structure of the Guide to enhance clarity and usability. In closing, France expressed particular appreciation to Australia, Canada, and New Zealand for their valuable input.
11. The Chair noted that the draft had been available on the meeting webpage for several days. It is intended as a tool to support and guide inspectors, with the overarching aim of promoting consistency in how estimations are conducted across different inspectors.
12. Key points raised in the discussions included:
 - **Potential Sources of Discrepancies Between Logbook and Estimated Catch.** It was noted that discrepancies may arise due to:
 - Retained catch from previous trips, which may affect estimation for the current trip.
 - Partial transshipment or offloading, which complicates alignment with logbook data.
 - Communication issues, particularly regarding species identification and catch volumes.
 - Variability in estimation methodologies, as standard methods may not be suitable for all fisheries. For example, species with diverse shapes and sizes and mixed species holds make it difficult to apply a uniform density or stacking factor. A simplified classification (e.g. loose, medium, tight) may not reflect real storage practices. Further multi-year research was recommended to refine methods.

- **Clarification on Estimation Methodology.** In response to a question, France explained that the methodology had been tested in French Polynesia and New Caledonia. France suggested that the methodology be trialled over a year. An invitation was extended for broader participation. It was clarified that any identified discrepancies should be documented in the inspection report and reviewed or clarified by the flag State as appropriate.
- **Role of the Tool in Addressing Discrepancies.** The Chair acknowledged that while discrepancies may arise, the main objective is to detect significant differences and notify the flag CCM so that they can consider the issue further. The Chair noted that as a whole the catch estimation method can be a useful tool to identify whether there are any significant differences which warrant the inspecting CCM informing the flag CCM.
- **Paragraph 15(c) and bullet 5:** All the factors are examples: suggest adding: “*The factors below are examples for the inspector’s reference. For the transparency of the process, it is important for the inspectors to record the factor used in the estimation process.*”
- **Suggestions to Improve Clarity and Transparency on the conversion and density factors:** A suggestion to add footnotes or references for conversion and density factors to explain how they were derived (e.g. if a conversion figure was taken from ICCAT, then a reference to ICCAT should be included. The same with the density factors).
- **Considerations on Stacking Factors Across Fisheries.** It was observed that stacking factors vary depending on the type of fishing vessel (e.g. purse seine, longline, trawler). Some frameworks, such as NAFO, require hold capacity plans, which may work for certain vessel types but are challenging to apply in tuna fisheries. It was cautioned against using a uniform stacking factor across all vessel types. Support was expressed for conducting field testing of the methodology over a one-year period. The Chair acknowledged the importance of assessing stacking factors, particularly in light of the differences between various fisheries.

13. France thanked participants for their valuable comments.

3.1.3 Photo and Video Evidence Guide – Canada

14. The Chair invited Canada to introduce the item, noting that the document had recently been uploaded to the WCPFC meeting page as [Working Paper 5](#).
15. Recognising that participants may not yet have had the opportunity to review it, Canada provided a general overview of [Working Paper 5](#). The purpose of the document is consistent with that of other Guides—it is a voluntary tool designed to assist inspectors in the collection and sharing of video and photographic evidence, particularly to support potential prosecutions. It may be updated as necessary, and relevant national authority requirements should also be taken into account, where known.
16. The document includes detailed guidance on various aspects of media handling, including:
- Organising file folders and ensuring proper data collection for media files;
 - Accepted media file types and capture of metadata;

- Emphasis that media content should not be altered or amended;
- Best practices for capturing video and providing contextual information;
- Handling and treatment of recorded media;
- Recommendations for maintaining a media log as part of a case package for the flag State;
- Options for sharing large media files with the flag CCM;
- Guidelines for disseminating supporting reports to assist flag CCM investigations.

It also outlines general considerations to be applied in both routine circumstances and cases where non-compliance has been identified.

17. Key points raised in the discussion included:

- The Chair highlighted the value of having standardized practices to ensure consistency in how video and photographic evidence is shared.

18. A CCM thanked Canada for its work on the guidance and expressed general support for the approach. They emphasized that media should be directly relevant to the alleged non-compliance, and that supporting evidence must be clearly linked to the fishing vessel under inspection. Establishing a clear connection between the alleged infringement and the information collected was considered essential.

19. A shark-specific example was shared, noting the important role such evidence can play. It was explained that work is ongoing with a researcher to develop an app that identifies unique denticles on shark fins. They said that the draft guidelines in Working Paper 5, were expected to be helpful for future compliance purposes.

20. The Chair concluded by noting that all participants would have further opportunities to review and comment on the draft following the meeting.

3.1.4 Bycatch Mitigation Guide – New Zealand

21. The Chair noted the existence of a draft Bycatch Mitigation Guide, which had not yet been posted on the website, and invited New Zealand to introduce the draft.

22. New Zealand acknowledged the significant contributions of Australia in assisting with the preparation of the Guide. The draft guide is now available as [Working Paper 6](#) on the meeting page. Unlike some other guidance documents, the bycatch mitigation guidelines are based on binding Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs). While the Guide focuses primarily on seabird bycatch mitigation, it is also applicable to other bycatch species. It outlines how mitigation measures can be documented and includes elements that authorised inspectors should consider. A key component of the draft is a newly developed HSBI reporting template, which functions as an inspection checklist. This template is designed to assist in identifying potential violations and provides clarity on the nature of any issues identified and how they can be addressed.

23. The Chair highlighted that the inspection template offers a practical process to promote consistency across inspections and supports effective use of mitigation tools by vessel masters.
24. One participant noted that they had not had sufficient time to review the draft Guide or to consult with relevant agencies and industry and therefore intended to provide further comments following the meeting or at TCC.
25. Another participant expressed a similar position but raised a procedural question regarding the inspection template—specifically, whether it is to be completed before or after boarding. In response, New Zealand explained that inspectors may perform certain actions, such as measuring tori lines, during the inspection itself.
26. New Zealand also observed that the schematic currently included in the draft does not accurately represent the tori line and referenced a Scientific Committee (SC) paper from Japan containing improved schematics, which could be used to enhance the template.

3.6 Measuring Tool Calibration Guide – Australia

27. The Chair acknowledged the valuable contributions made by a representative from the EU, Marta Llopis López, to the development of [Working Paper 4](#).
28. Australia provided an overview of the work completed to date, noting that the focus had primarily been on the calibration standards of measuring tools, which are used for and closely linked to the Bycatch Mitigation Guide. Where there is repeated or overlapping text across Guides, efforts will be made to ensure consistency.
29. As with other guidance documents, the draft Guide outlines the purpose and intended use of the tools. It is concise and includes key requirements for recording and transmitting measurement results, as well as guidelines on the calibration and recalibration of measurement instruments. The primary objective is to assist flag States in any subsequent investigations, which may require measuring tool calibration information. The Chair noted that the Guide currently covers two types of measurement tools: tapes and scales.
30. One participant emphasized the Guide's importance for ensuring consistency in High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI) procedures and requested additional time to consider its contents, indicating they would provide comments via email. They also raised two specific suggestions:
 - **Paragraph 7:** A proposal to include “*vessel marking and identification*”, as inspectors may use measurement tools to verify features such as the size of vessel name lettering.
 - **Paragraph 10(c):** A suggestion to revise the language stating that details of the measuring tool could be provided to the flag State. The participant recommended that such information be provided only “*at the request of the flag CCM*”, and only on reasonable grounds.
31. The Chair invited views on whether any additional types of measurement tools may require calibration and encouraged participants to submit further comments by email in the coming weeks.

3.2 Updates on review of 2009 Standardized Multi-language Questionnaire (English)

32. The Chair noted that the [updated version](#) available on the meeting website had incorporated the comments proposed by one member. The WCPFC Secretariat confirmed that no further written comments had been received. Any future updates or additional revisions to the document would require further guidance from CCMs. The Chair also highlighted an opportunity for CCMs to provide input on the Multi-language Questionnaire prior to TCC.
33. One CCM emphasised the importance of the questionnaire, noting that it was established several years ago and had been revised to accommodate new CMMs. It was suggested that inspection teams should take steps to update the questionnaire, as it is actively used by vessel masters. The CCM further acknowledged the quality of boarding inspection questionnaires used by Australia and New Zealand and requested that these be shared to support updates to the WCPFC questionnaire.
34. The Chair confirmed this as an action item and invited suggestions on which specific CMMs that are regularly reviewed during HSBI activities, should be addressed in the questionnaire updates.

Agenda Item 4. Programme of Work and Next Meeting

35. The Chair confirmed the following next steps and timeline for finalising HSBI Guides:

I. **Extended Time for Review and Feedback**

The Chair noted the desirability of having three weeks for participants to review the draft Guides and provide comments via email. The aim is to finalise and post the Guides one month before the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC) meeting to allow adequate time for further consideration. The Secretariat noted that there is no fixed date for papers to be submitted for TCC consideration, and the Chair suggested that we aim to post the draft guides for TCC21 by the first week of September.

II. **Timeline Overview**

36. **Week of 11 August:** Updated Guides to be posted taking into consideration written comments provided at HSBIWG03. Chair will provide an email to all participants setting out the date by which comments should be provided.

- **3-week Comment Period:** Desirable period to provide participants to provide feedback. If the Guides are issued during the week of 11 August, then participants would be requested to provide comments by the end of August.
- **Early September:** Target date for updated draft Guides to be posted for TCC21.
- **24 – 30 September TCC21 Meeting:** Participants will have the opportunity to provide further input on the draft Guides prior to and during TCC21. A meeting of the HSBI Working Group may be convened in the margins of TCC. The objective at TCC21 is to recommend the five draft HSBI Guides to the Commission.

Agenda Item 5. Summary and Close of Meeting

37. The Chair expressed appreciation to all participants for their constructive input and for their continued support in the development of the voluntary guides. The meeting closed at 12.15pm Pohnpei time.



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Adopted Agenda

1. Opening of Meeting
2. Introduction and Opening Remarks
3. Discuss Draft HSBI Voluntary Regional Guides | TOOLS FOR HIGH SEAS BOARDING AND INSPECTIONS
 1. Draft Voluntary guides for
 1. DNA Testing in HSBI – Australia
 2. Use of Volumetrics Method for Estimating the Fish Quantity Onboard – France
 3. Photo and Video Evidence Guide – Canada
 4. Bycatch Mitigation Guide – New Zealand
 5. Measuring Tool Calibration Guide - Australia
 2. Updates on review of 2009 Standardized Multi-language Questionnaire (English)
4. Programme of Work and Next Meeting
5. Summary and Close of Meeting

THIRD MEETING OF HSBI WG
ONLINE

7 August 2025

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

CHAIR

David Power

AFMA

Senior Manager

david.power@afma.gov.au

AUSTRALIA

Emily Lawson

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Senior Fisheries Officer

emily.lawson@afma.gov.au

Grace Fidge

AFMA

Investigations officer

grace.fidge@afma.gov.au

CANADA

Patricia DeMille

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Senior Compliance Officer, Conservation and
Protection International Programs

Patricia.DeMille@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Felicia Cull

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Senior Policy Advisor

felicia.cull@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

CHINA

Chen Junlin

Fisheries Management and Law Enforcement
Service Centre

officer

Li Yan

China Overseas Fisheries Association

Deputy Director of Highseas Fisheries

liyan@cofa.net.cn

Panpan

Fisheries Management and Law Enforcement
Service Centre - Coordinator

Xue Fei

Fisheries Management and Law Enforcement
Service Centre - Officer

Zhe Geng

Shanghai Ocean University

Stock Assessment Scientist

zgeng@shou.edu.cn

FRANCE

Elodie Seznec

ministère of the overseas territories
France

elodie.seznec@outre-mer.gouv.fr

Marie Feucher

Maritimes affairs office in French Polynesia
Head of office

marie.feucher@mer.gouv.fr

JAPAN

Masahide Kannou

Fisheries Agency of Japan

Staff, International Affairs Division

masahide_kanno210@maff.go.jp

Nobushige Shimizu

Fisheries Agency of Japan

Staff

nobushige_shimizu640@maff.go.jp

Takeshi Miwa

Fisheries Agency of Japan

Counsellor

takeshi_miwa090@maff.go.jp

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Ilkang Na

Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries
Multilateral Fisheries Negotiator

Jae-geol Yang

Korea Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Center
Policy Analyst
jg718@kofci.org

Jiwon Kim

Korea Overseas Fisheries Association
Staff
jwkim@kosfa.org

Kim Taerin

Delegate Member -Advisor
shararak@korea.kr

Sangjin Baek

Korea Overseas Fisheries Association
Assistant Manager
sjbaek@kosfa.org

NEW ZEALAND

Jordan Owczarek

Ministry for Primary Industries
Compliance Adviser, International Fisheries
jordan.Owczarek@mpi.govt.nz

Justine Duder

Ministry for Primary Industries
Pacific Fisheries Advisor
justine.duder@mpi.govt.nz

CHINESE TAIPEI

Alexa Chang

Fisheries Agency, Ministry of Agriculture,
TAIWAN
Project Assistant
chechun1119@ms1.fg.gov.tw

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Eleanor Bors

NOAA Fisheries
International Affairs, Trade, and Commerce
eleanor.bors@noaa.gov

Maile Norman

United States Coast Guard
Coast Guard District Fourteen Enforcement
maile.c.norman@uscg.mil

Rachel Ryan

U.S. Department of State
Foreign Affairs Officer
RyanRL@state.gov

Tyler Lawson

NOAA Fisheries
Fish Biologist
tyler.lawson@noaa.gov

SHARKS PACIFIC

Bubba Cook

Sharks Pacific
Policy Director
bubba@sharkspacific.org

WCPFC SECRETARIAT

Eidre Sharp

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
Deputy Compliance Manager
Eidre.Sharp@wcpfc.int

Erlick Leopold

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
Data Entry and Reporting Technician
erlick.leopold@wcpfc.int

Hilary Ayrton

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
Fisheries Management and Compliance Adviser
hilary.ayrton@wcpfc.int

Jeannie M. Nanpei

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
CCM Support Officer
jeannie.nanpei@wcpfc.int

Joseph Jack

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
Reporting Analyst Officer
Joseph.Jack@wcpfc.int

Kilafwasru Albert

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
Reporting Analyst Officer
Kilafwasru.Albert@wcpfc.int

Lara Manarangi-Trott

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
Compliance Manager
Lara.Manarangi-Trott@wcpfc.int

Natsuko Akinaga

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
HR Officer
natsuko.akinaga@wcpfc.int

Penelope Ridings

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
Legal Advisor
pennyridings@yahoo.com

Raijeli Dranibaka-Natadra

WCPFC
Consultant
Raijeli.Dranibaka-Natadra@wcpfc.int

SureAnn Poll

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
Vessel Management Officer
sureann.poll@wcpfc.int

Tim Jones

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries
Commission (WCPFC)
IT Manager
tim.jones@wcpfc.int