
**PREPARATORY CONFERENCE FOR THE COMMISSION FOR
THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF HIGHLY
MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS IN THE WESTERN AND
CENTRAL PACIFIC**

Sixth session
Bali, Indonesia
19 – 23 April 2004

WCPFC/PrepCon/38
23 April 2004

**WORKING GROUP II: SCIENTIFIC STRUCTURE AND PROVISION OF INTERIM
SCIENTIFIC ADVICE**

Summary report by the Chairman of the Working Group

1. WG.II met in accordance with the terms of reference agreed at PrepCon I (WCPFC/PrepCon/4). The meeting was chaired by Dr John Kalish.
2. The agreed agenda was based on the annotated agenda distributed to participants in March 2004 (WCPFC/PrepCon/WP.22). The matters considered by WG.II during this session included:
 - (a) operation of the Scientific Committee
 - (b) Scientific Coordinating Group, 2004 agenda
 - (c) further development of the proposed initiative to enhance data collection in Indonesia and Philippines;
 - (d) the provision of scientific advice in relation to northern stocks as related to the activities of the Northern Committee; and
 - (e) further development of the strategies for meeting the special requirements of developing States and territories with respect to data requirements and technical capabilities.
3. A list of the working documents referred to by WG.II is attached as Annex I.

Agenda item 1. Operation of the Scientific Committee

4. WG.II recommended the following with respect to the operation of the Scientific Committee:

The number and timing of SC meetings.

5. A single meeting combining the work of the Scientific Committee (SC) and Specialist Working Groups (SWG) should be held annually at least two months prior to the annual meeting of the Commission. Some tasks may be carried out by email or other means in order to expedite the work of the SC.
6. In order to take advantage of the most recent stock assessment advice the most appropriate timing for Commission meetings would be in the final quarter of the year. If the stock

assessments are based on a yearly cycle, the data for the most recent years become available around the end of April. Consequently, if stock assessments are undertaken from May to July and reviewed by the SWG and SC by the end of August, outcomes from the SC could be delivered to the Commission in September. This would allow time for review and development of proposals by members prior to the Commission meeting. A provisional timeline of the process is provided in Annex II.

7. WG.II noted that its recommendation that a SC meeting in advance of the annual Commission would have financial implications. It was therefore recommended that the draft indicative budget contained in WCPFC/PrepCon/WP.20 be revised to reflect funding for participation by one participant from each developing State party and each participating territory at the SC meeting, in addition to the costs already identified for funding participation at the Commission meeting.

Location of the meeting

8. The selection of the location of SC meetings should be influenced by cost-effectiveness and efficiency. The first meeting of the SC should be in December 2004 in conjunction with the first meeting of the Commission. The purpose of this SC meeting would be to elect a Chair and Vice-chair for the SC for 2005, and to make necessary recommendations for the establishment of SWGs, so that meetings for 2005 can be organized. With respect to the process for election of the Chair and Vice-chair, it was noted that the draft rules of procedure for the Commission would be taken up by the Commission at its first session and that rule 31 of the draft rules provided that, pending the approval by the Commission of rules for the efficient conduct of meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission and except as otherwise provided in the Convention, the rules of procedure for the Commission would apply, mutatis mutandis, to the proceedings of the SC.

Scientific Committee work plan for Year 1 (2005)

9. WG.II recommended the agenda for the meeting of the SC in 2005 should, inter alia, include:

- (a) provision of stock status advice to the Commission on the target stocks, notably bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna, arising from the stock assessments covered by SC in 2005;
- (b) other scientific matters, including the provision of advice on ecosystem and bycatch issues as required under article 12 of the Convention;
- (c) research priorities, research planning, and coordination (standing item);
- (d) Special needs of developing States and Territories relating to scientific matters (standing item).

Role of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish from 2005 onwards.

10. The structures of the proposed SWGs will be similar to those of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish (SCTB) working groups.

11. Proposed SWGs of the SC to be discussed further at SCG 3 include:
- Stock Assessment Working Group (includes consideration of tuna and billfish stocks).
 - Methods Working Group.

- Statistics Working Group.
- Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group.
- Fishing Technology Working Group.

12. It was noted that in 2005 SCTB is likely to cease to exist and therefore the tasks completed by that body will be carried out by the Scientific Committee via the Specialist Working Groups. WG.II identified the need for assistance, from the OFP-SPC, with the organization of the first meeting of the SWG in 2005.

13. WG.II acknowledged the excellent work done by the SCTB in the development and carrying out of fisheries science in the Western and Central Pacific region. Further, the effectiveness of the SCTB in developing a productive and collaborative research environment was recognized.

Agenda item 2. Scientific Coordinating Group, 2004 agenda

14. WG.II recommended the following on the SCG for 2004:

(a) SCG 3 should be held in Majuro, Marshall Island from 19 - 21 August 2004, immediately following SCTB 17. The meeting will be chaired by Dr Yuji Uozumi (Japan).

(b) Participation by Pacific Island FFA members will be dependent on funding. In the past, special funding has been made available through the PrepCon process to assist with participation of representatives from developing State, including airfares and per diems.

15. WG.II recommended the agenda for the meeting of SCG 3 should, inter alia, include:

(a) provision of stock status advice to PrepCon VII on the target stocks arising from the stock assessments covered by SCTB 17;

(b) other scientific matters, including the provision of advice on ecosystem and bycatch issues;

(c) consideration of issues of data standards and other data related issues. The Statistics Working Group of SCTB 17 will provide a report on this matter for SCG 3 to consider;

(d) discussions in response to any requests from PrepCon VI deliberations on the paper entitled *Management options for bigeye and yellowfin tuna in the western and central Pacific Ocean* (WCPFC/PrepCon/WP.24) and related intersessional work;

(e) discussions on the nature and extent of work required to develop management scenario models, for example development of operating models; and

(f) identification of Specialist Working Groups of the Scientific Committee.

Agenda item 3. Further development of the proposed initiative to enhance data collection in Indonesia and the Philippines

16. The Chair referred members to the document *Proposal for monitoring the catches of highly migratory species in the Philippines and the Pacific Ocean waters of Indonesia*, prepared by the Oceanic Fisheries Programme dated December 2003 (distributed to members by the Interim Secretariat by email on 9 March 2004).

17. WG.II supported the work proposed. In particular, Chinese Taipei has contributed US\$ 20,000 to the project. The United States indicated that it intended to contribute US\$ 60,000 in 2004. Japan indicated its intention to make a contribution to the project in 2006 following ratification of the Convention. New Zealand, European Community, Korea and France indicated that they were investigating their respective potentials to contribute funds in the near future.

18. Australia has agreed to fund a review of the tuna fisheries and the current statistical system in the Pacific Ocean waters of Indonesia and is considering funding a similar review in the Philippines.

19. The Chair noted that because the proposal is costed at US\$ 292,000 there was still a considerable shortfall in the short-term and activities contained in the proposal required prioritization. To this end a Steering Group was formed that included representatives from Indonesia, the Philippines, the two current donors (Chinese Taipei, United States), the OFP-SPC, and the Chairman of WG.II. This group was tasked with implementing the project to the extent possible with available funds. The first meeting of the Steering Group was held after the WG.II meeting and a report of the meeting is attached in Annex IV.

Agenda item 4. The provision of scientific advice in relation to northern stocks as related to the activities of the Northern Committee

20. Dr Jeff Polovina, Chair of the Interim Scientific Committee (ISC), described the functions and recent work of the ISC. Dr Polovina's report was based on the *Report of the plenary session of the fourth meeting of the Interim Scientific Committee for tuna and tuna-like species in the North Pacific*.

21. WG.II produced and discussed a schematic that illustrated the flow of scientific information and advice from the ISC (Annex III). Further, WG.II discussed the need to develop a Memorandum of Understanding to clarify the relationship between the ISC and the Commission.

Agenda item 5. Further development of the strategies for meeting the special requirements of developing States and territories with respect to data requirements and technical capabilities

22. The Chair referred to the report *Capacity of Pacific Island Countries and Territories to meet the likely data requirements of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission* (WCPFC/PrepCon/WP.15/Add.1) which was reviewed by WG.II at PrepCon V.

23. WG.II noted the following view of Forum Fishery Agency members:

(a) while the data requirement issue and the capacity of the PICTs has been adequately documented in the above report, the other long term issues relating to capacity needs in the PICTS covering fisheries science and management have not been assessed at this stage;

(b) FFA members advised that the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is currently assisting Pacific Island countries to design a programme of assistance for the implementation of the Convention. One element of this assistance is a programme of national missions to assess the needs of Pacific Island countries in relation to the implementation of the Convention. This work, to be undertaken before August 2004, will provide a good basis for developing proposals to meet the needs of Pacific Island countries, including through the operation of the Commission's Special Requirements Fund and voluntary fund. FFA members will present specific ideas to the PrepCon and the Commission when this work is completed.

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Annex I

LIST OF DOCUMENTS USED TO ASSIST DISCUSSIONS AT WG.II

WCPFC/PrepCon/CRP.2

Revised draft rules of procedure of the Commission for the Conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks in the Western and Central Pacific. 18 p.

WCPFC/PrepCon/WP.15/Add.1

Capacity of Pacific Island Countries and Territories to meet the likely data requirements of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. SPC Report dated September 2003. 38 p.

WCPFC/PrepCon/WP.22

Management options for bigeye and yellowfin tuna in the western and central Pacific Ocean. Prepared by the Interim Secretariat. 26 p.

WCPFC/PrepCon/WP.24

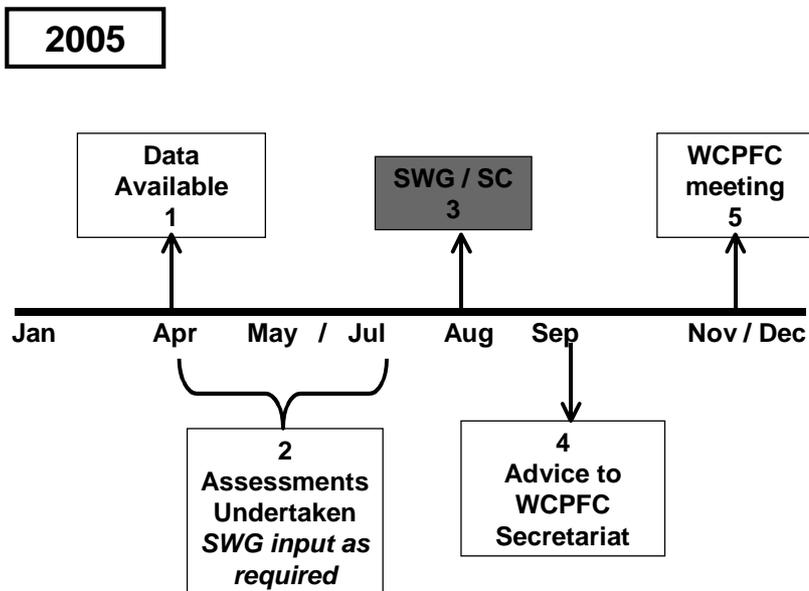
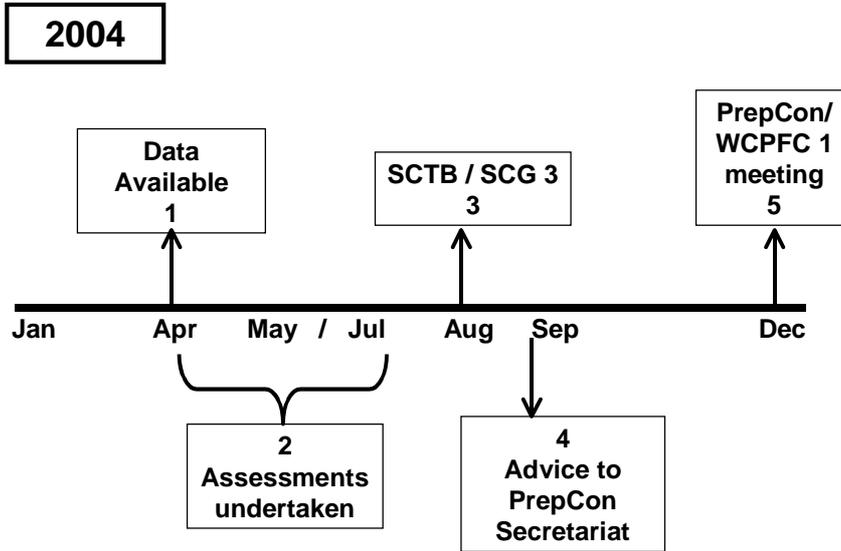
Working Group II: Provisional annotated agenda and guide to discussions at PrepCon VI. Prepared by the Interim Secretariat. 26 p.

Proposal for monitoring the catches of highly migratory species in the Philippines and the Pacific Ocean waters of Indonesia. Prepared by the Oceanic Fisheries Programme, Secretariat of the Pacific Community Noumea, New Caledonia dated December 2003. 40 p.

Report of the plenary session of the fourth meeting of the Interim Scientific Committee for tuna and tuna-like species in the North Pacific. Held in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA February 2-4, 2004. 31 p.

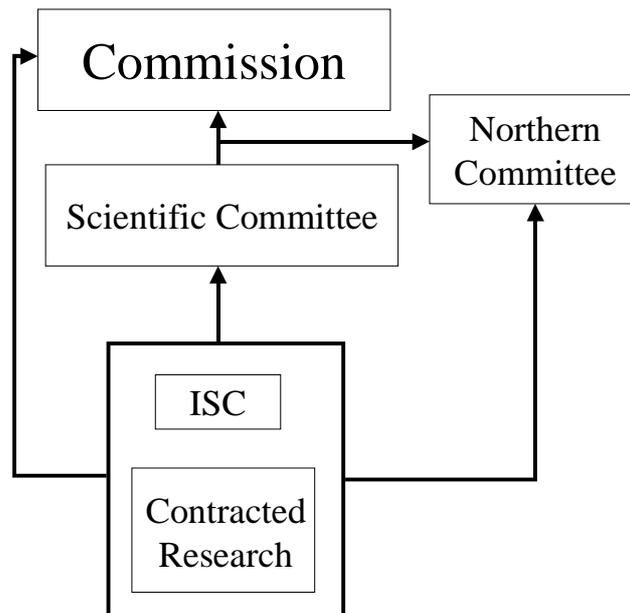
Annex II

**TIME LINE FOR THE FLOW OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION AND ADVICE
DURING 2004 AND 2005**



Annex III

**POSSIBLE SCHEME FOR FLOW OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION AND ADVICE IN
RESPECT TO THE NORTHERN STOCKS**



Annex IV

REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE INDONESIA AND PHILIPPINES DATA COLLECTION STEERING COMMITTEE

The first meeting of the Indonesia and Philippines Data Collection Steering Committee was held on Wednesday, 21 April 2004, in Bali, Indonesia, immediately following the first session of Working Group II at PrepCon VI, and was attended by participants from Chinese Taipei (Chung-Hai Kwoh, Chi-Lu Sun), Indonesia (Subhat Nurhakim, Purwanto, Purwito), the Philippines (Stan Swerdloff), the United States of America (Ray Clarke, Robert Skillman) and the SPC Oceanic Fisheries Programme (Tim Lawson), and the chairman of Working Group II (John Kalish). Mr Lawson was elected chairman of the Steering Committee.

During the first session of Working Group II at PrepCon VI, Mr Lawson presented a "Proposal for Monitoring the Catches of Highly Migratory Species in the Philippines and the Pacific Ocean Waters of Indonesia". Prior to PrepCon VI, Chinese Taipei contributed USD 20,000 towards the proposal and at PrepCon VI, the United States indicated that it would contribute USD 60,000. However, the total amount budgeted in the proposal for port sampling in Indonesia and the Philippines for a two-year period is USD 292,000. The Steering Committee therefore considered how to allocate the USD 80,000 that are currently available, while bearing in mind that other potential donors (European Community, France, Japan, Korea and New Zealand) have indicated that they may also contribute to the proposal at a later date.

It was noted that, under the proposal, a review of the tuna fisheries and the current statistical systems in the Philippines and eastern Indonesia will be conducted prior to port sampling and that Australia has under consideration the funding of the review for eastern Indonesia. (Australia has also funded a review and port sampling for western Indonesia that has been implemented in recent years in collaboration with Indonesia, Japan and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission.) Australia has also indicated that it would fund the review for Philippines, but only if funds were available from other sources to conduct follow-up activities, such as the port sampling.

It was also noted that the cost of port sampling during the first year in the Philippines, where a port sampling programme has already been established but which is operating at a very low level of coverage due to the lack of funds, is USD 66,000, whereas the cost of the first year of port sampling in eastern Indonesia, where a programme has yet to be established, will cost USD 87,000.

It was therefore agreed that the USD 80,000 that are currently available should be allocated to the Philippines. The participants were optimistic that additional funds will soon be contributed to allow port sampling in eastern Indonesia. It was hoped that funds will be contributed in time to commence the port sampling immediately following the review of the tuna fisheries and the current statistical system in eastern Indonesia, which may be completed by late 2004.

The relationship between the activities that will be conducted under the PrepCon proposal and the regular tuna fishery statistical programmes of the governments of Indonesia and the Philippines was discussed. It was noted that unlike previous tuna fishery sampling programmes that have occurred in both countries, the sampling under the current proposal will be conducted and supervised entirely by government staff, with expatriate involvement only in the review of sampling programmes and some data analysis. The activities that will be conducted under the PrepCon proposal will therefore be completely integrated into the regular statistical programmes of Indonesia and the Philippines.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Steering Committee should take place in conjunction with the first meeting of the Commission, which is tentatively scheduled for early December 2004. The status of project activities and developments in regard to project funding will be considered.

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