**DRAFT Two-Year Workplan for the ICCAT Standing Working Group (SWGSM) for Enhancing the Dialogue Between Fisheries Scientists and Managers**

Prepared by the SWGSM Chair

**Background**

At its 2013 annual meeting, ICCAT adopted the *Recommendation By ICCAT for Enhancing the Dialogue Between Fisheries Scientists and Managers* [Rec. 13-18, **Appendix 1**]. The Recommendation generally aims to enhance communication and foster mutual understanding between fisheries managers and scientists in order to facilitate more streamlined, science-based decision-making. As well, the Recommendation outlines specific tasks to be achieved during the first SWGSM meeting.

The purpose of this document is to propose an initial two-year workplan for the SWGSM, as well as a draft agenda for its first meeting.

**Process and priority stocks**

Rec. [13-18] is explicit about the composition of the SWGSM and its role in terms of developing formal Recommendations for the Commission to consider. Based on these provisions, and the positive experience gained elsewhere with a similar process for dialogue (e.g. WCPFC), the process would benefit from a combination of formal and informal components:

* The Formal components would primarily entail the work driven by CPCs towards development of draft Recommendations and Resolutions to be transmitted to the Commission for consideration. This would include, for example, proposed limit and target reference points for individual stocks, or proposed actions for the implementation of Rec. [11-13] (*Recommendation by ICCAT on the Principles of Decision Making for ICCAT*) to individual stocks.
* The Informal components would primarily entail presentations and discussions aimed at enhancing communication and fostering mutual understanding between fisheries managers and scientists. This would include all activities that enhance the dialogue. An example would be presentations where fishery managers inform scientists about the legal and socio-economic constraints associated with adopting alternative management actions. Another example would be presentations where scientists explain to fishery managers the concept of Management Strategy Evaluation.

ICCAT has already made various decisions in SCRS has been mandated to carry out work to develop and/or test candidate limit and target reference points, harvest control rules and harvest strategies for individual stocks. There are six such priority stocks as shown below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stock** | **SCRS to advice** | **Ref.** |
| N. Atl. ALB | 2016 | Rec. [13-05] |
| Eastern BFT | 2015 | Rec. [13-09] |
| Western BFT | 2015 | Rec. [13-09] |
| Eastern SKJ | 2014 | 2013 Comm |
| Western SKJ | 2014 | 2013 Comm |
| N. Atl. SWO | 2016 | Rec. [13-02] |

The above prioritization does no exclude the possibility of advancing work of a general nature that would apply to all ICCAT managed stocks when the Commission adopts similar requirements for such stocks.

**Two-year Goals**

Rec. [13-18] mandates that the first SWGSM meeting take place in 2014, with subsequent meetings to be agreed by the Commission. The following timeline of outcomes is proposed based on the assumption that the Commission will decide that the SWGSM will meet annually during 2014-2016.

**2014**

* Enhanced dialogue on the main components of management strategies (data collection and analyses, Target and Limit Reference points, Harvest Control Rules, Management Strategy Evaluations, etc.)
* Discussion on potential management objectives for stocks under the purview of ICCAT, taking into consideration the ICCAT Convention and ICCAT decisions (including Recommendation [11-13]).
* Consideration of the draft 2015-2020 SCRS Science Strategic Plan and suggestions for further improvements in ICCAT science and management processes and research needs and priorities.

**2015**

* Continued enhanced dialogue on the main components of management strategies (data collection and analyses, Target and Limit Reference points, Harvest Control Rules, Management Strategy Evaluations, etc.)
* Practical considerations for the adoption of management strategies for each of the six priority stocks.
* Recommendations for the consideration of other stocks, including sharks and non-target species
* Development of future work plan for the SWGSM

**Appendix 1**

**[13-18] RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT FOR ENHANCING THE DIALOGUE**

**BETWEEN FISHERIES SCIENTISTS AND MANAGERS**

CONSIDERING scientific advice released by the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) as the corner stone for establishing a proper management framework on stocks and fisheries under the purview of ICCAT;

RECOGNIZING that an in depth understanding by the Commission of scientific advice and management recommendations made by the SCRS should ease the adoption by the Commission of relevant and effective conservation measures;

NOTING that the ICCAT Resolution 11-17 on best available science recommends improving the communication between CPCs, the Commission and the SCRS by enabling a constant dialogue;

RECALLING the work in the Working Group of Fisheries Managers and Scientists held in June 2013 in support of the W-BFT stock assessment;

HIGHLIGHTING the need to further enhance the dialogue between fisheries managers and scientists in the coming years in order to achieve the Convention objectives in the most efficient and effective way;

STRESSING that such enhanced dialogue should, in particular, allow the Commission to focus on the establishment of management frameworks that take into account Target and Limit Reference points, associated level of risks and related Harvest Control Rules consistent with Recommendation 11-13;

STRESSING FURTHERMORE that such enhanced dialogue should also allow the Commission to focus on the review and the establishment of research priorities, considering more particularly the development of Strategic Plan on Science, and to explore further improvements in ICCAT science and management processes;

RECALLING that provisions laid down in Recommendation 11-26 establishing a meeting participation fund should ease the attendance of fisheries scientist and managers from developing Contracting Parties and therefore contribute to an inclusive and participative dialogue.

EMPHASIZING that the Commission management decisions should be based on the best available science independently developed by the SCRS.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT

1. A standing working group dedicated to the dialogue between fisheries scientists and managers (“SWGSM”) is established under the following objectives and rules.

2. The standing working group consists in enhancing communication and in fostering mutual understanding between fisheries managers and scientists, in particular on management strategies, including data collection, research needs and priorities, and establishment of limit and target reference points, as well as to promote the efficient use of scientific resources and information. The working group will seek to establish management strategies for the ICCAT fisheries which are consistent with the objectives of the ICCAT convention, an ecosystem-based approach and a precautionary approach.

3. The Chair of the standing working group will be selected by the Commission.

4. The standing working group will meet inter-sessionally and its meetings will be open to fisheries managers of Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing entities (CPCs), SCRS scientists and accredited observers. Fishery managers of the CPCs and fishery scientists of the SCRS will be considered on an equal footing during the standing working group meetings. Other experts may be invited to specific meeting of the standing working group depending on the topics to be discussed.

5. The structure of the meetings will, include an open forum/dialogue. Recommendations to the Commission shall be developed through formal sessions of the standing working group.

6. The first meeting of the standing working group will take place prior to the 2014 Commission Annual

Meeting. The focus of that meeting will be:

a. the use of BMSY and FMSY and other proxies as Target and/or Limit Reference points, Harvest Control Rules, and associated probabilities, allowing, in particular, the implementation of a precautionary approach and Recommendation [11-13], for the management of stocks under the purview of ICCAT, and

b. possible further improvements in ICCAT science and management processes and research needs and priorities, in particular in the light of the SCRS annual work programme and of the development of the Strategic Plan on Science.

7. Further meetings of the standing working group will be decided by the Commission during its special and regular meetings.

**Appendix 2**

**DRAFT Agenda for the First Meeting of the ICCAT Standing Working Group (SWGSM) for Enhancing the Dialogue Between Fisheries Scientists and Managers**

*Madrid, Spain, May xx, 2014 (2 days)*

1. Opening of the meeting

2. Adoption of Agenda and meeting arrangements

3. Appointment of the Rapporteur

4. Review of the objectives of the SWGSM and expected meeting outcomes

5. Overview of the ICCAT framework for decision-making, including, *inter alia*, the Convention, Recommendation [11-13] and other relevant international instruments

6. Overview of the basic components of precautionary management strategies

- Limit and target reference points, and associated probabilities

- Harvest Control Rules / management procedures

- Dealing with uncertainty

- Other aspects, including data collection and analyses

7. Considerations of biological limits and relevant indicators

- Biological

- Ecosystem

- Other

8. Considerations for management objectives and relevant indicators

- Biological

- Economic

- Social

- Ecosystem

- Other

9. Overview of relevant work by SCRS

10. Discussion on reference points (MSY-based and others, including proxies) and their appropriateness as limits or targets for tuna stocks

11. Review of the SCRS Science Strategic Plan and annual work programme

12. Suggestions for further improvements in ICCAT science and management processes and research needs and priorities

13. Recommendations to the Commission

14. Adoption of the report and Adjournment

**Appendix 2**

**DRAFT Annotated Agenda for the First Meeting of the ICCAT Standing Working Group (SWGSM) for Enhancing the Dialogue Between Fisheries Scientists and Managers**

*Madrid, Spain, May xx, 2014 (2 days)*

1. Opening of the meeting

2. Adoption of Agenda and meeting arrangements

3. Appointment of the Rapporteur

4. Review of the objectives of the SWGSM and expected meeting outcomes

*Overview by the SWGSM Chair.*

5. Overview of the ICCAT framework for decision-making, including, *inter alia*, the Convention, Recommendation [11-13] and other relevant international instruments

*Presentation by managers on ICCAT's framework for adopting conservation and management measures, including thoughts on how Rec. [11-13] could be implemented for priority species.*

6. Overview of the basic components of precautionary management strategies

- Limit and target reference points, and associated probabilities

- Harvest Control Rules / management procedures

- Dealing with uncertainty

- Other aspects, including data collection and analyses

*Presentation by scientists on how the Precautionary Approach can be implemented through reference points, harvest control rules, and other elements of harvest strategies.*

7. Considerations of biological limits and relevant indicators

- Biological

- Ecosystem

- Other

*Presentation by scientists on how the scientific process can provide guidance for the adoption of limit reference points.*

8. Considerations for management objectives and relevant indicators

- Biological

- Economic

- Social

- Ecosystem

- Other

*Presentation by managers on the various elements that should be taken into account in setting target reference points, and potential indicators.*

9. Overview of relevant work by SCRS

*Presentation by SCRS Chair on relevant work done by SCRS in recent years and future plans.*

10. Discussion on reference points (MSY-based and others, including proxies) and their appropriateness as limits or targets for tuna stocks

*Exchange of views between manages and scientists on potential candidate limit and target reference points for priority stocks.*

11. Review of the SCRS Science Strategic Plan and annual work programme

*Presentation by the SCRS Chair on the five-year Strategic Plan for SCRS.*

12. Suggestions for further improvements in ICCAT science and management processes and research needs and priorities

*Exchange of views on how ICCAT's science and stock management process could be further improved.*

13. Recommendations to the Commission

14. Adoption of the report and Adjournment