14TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SPRFMO COMMISSION

Panama City, Panama, 2 to 6 March 2026

COMM14 – Report
ANNEX 4a Scientific Committee Multi-Annual Workplan

1. Jack Mackerel Working Group

Code	Activity	Coordinator	Funding		
			2026	2027	2028
1.1 Jack mackerel assessment					
1.1.1	Review available input data and its quality for the JM assessment	CHL, EU	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
1.1.2	Provide TAC advice according to Commission request	SC	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
1.1.3	Experts support during SC assessment	SC Chair Secretariat	NZ$ 16K	NZ$ 16K	NZ$ 16K
1.1.4	Continue to update and compare standardizations of commercial tuning indices among different fleets and the impacts of increased efficiency in the fleets	CHL, PER, EU	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
1.2 Jack Mackerel MSE					
1.2.1	Develop and carry out an MSE	USA, EU	N/A	N/A	N/A
1.2.2	External support for MSE technical work	JMWG Chair	165k NZD (35k VUT, 130k EU)	N/A	N/A
1.2.3	MSE in-person workshop (after intersessional work 1.2.1)	USA	NZD 35k	N/A	N/A
1.2.4	Finalise a recommendation on Management Procedures (after 1.2.3)	SC	N/A	N/A	N/A
1.4 Jack Mackerel Ageing Techniques					
1.4.1	Workshop to evaluate methodologies for implementation in age readings in otoliths of jack mackerel (*T. murphyi*) among the age and growth laboratories of the SPRFMO.	CHL, PER	In-kind	N/A	N/A
1.5 Chub mackerel					

2. Deepwater Working Group

Code	Activity	Coordinator	Funding		
			2026	2027	2028
2.1 Orange roughy assessment					
2.1.2	Estimate stock status	NZL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
2.1.3	Provide advice on sustainable catch levels	NZL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
2.1.4	Coordinate and design acoustic surveys for relevant stocks (*intersessional consideration*)	NZL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
2.2 Deep water stock structure					
2.2.3	Investigate the stock structure of orange roughy on the Westpac Bank and adjacent New Zealand EEZ	NZL	In-kind	in kind	in kind
2.3 Other stock assessments, & ecological risk assessment					
2.3.1	Review the risk assessment of teleost and elasmobranch species considering new available information and methods	AUS (2030)	N/A	N/A	N/A
2.3.2	Assess other assessment options for hapuku and blue eye trevalla including standardised CPUE	AUS	In-kind	In-kind	N/A
2,3,3	Refine species list for chondrichtyans in SPRFMO area and review the suitability of distribution data	AUS/NZ	N/A	In-kind	In-kind
2.4 VME Encounters and benthic bycatch					
2.4.1	Develop VME taxa ID guide for benthic bycatch, following the steps proposed in SC9-DW12, and associated training videos	NZL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
2.4.2	Evaluate the performance of the spatial management measures	NZL	In-kind	N/A	N/A
2.4.3	To improve the particle tracking model used in the validation of the bioregionalization and investigate connectivity amongst geographically separated areas of the same bioregion	NZL	In-kind	N/A	N/A
2.4.4	Develop a standard to identify a VME eligible to be listed in Annex 9 of CMM03	NZL/AUS	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
2.5 Bottom Fishery Impact Assessment					
2.5.1	The Scientific Committee shall review, and update if required, the SPRFMO BFIAS every 5 years, to ensure that it reflects, as appropriate, best practice. Standing item	DWWG (2030)	N/A	N/A	N/A
2.5.2	For VME taxa potentially at risk of SAI, improve and validate abundance models, using independent data	NZL	In-kind	N/A	N/A
2.5.3	With a focus on VME Indicator taxa currently estimated to be most impacted by fishing, work to reduce uncertainties in risk assessments for benthic habitats and VMEs by exploring the overlap between the spatial distribution of bottom trawling fishing impact (i.e., the 'naturalness layer') and abundance estimates of VME indicator taxa [potentially at multiple spatial scales, including Management Areas] Contingent on previous task	NZL	-	In-kind	In-kind
2.5.4	Complete Cumulative BFIA. Standing item	AUS/NZL	N/A	In-kind	N/A
2.5.5	Derive an SAI threshold from an empirical study tailored to the dRBS approach	NZL	In-kind	In-kind	N/A

2.6 CMM 03 request regarding Encounters with VMEs					
2.6.1	Developing a multi-spatial scale risk-based approach to assess encounters with VME indicator taxa	NZL	N/A	N/A	In-kind
2.6.2	Review all reported VME encounters	NZL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
2.6.3	Conduct an independent analysis on observational data related to the 2024 NZ encounter	NZL	In-kind	N/A	N/A
2.7 CMM 03 request regarding ongoing appropriateness					
2.7.1	Review all available data and provide advice on the ongoing appropriateness of the management measures to ensure the CMM continues to achieve its objective and the objectives of the Convention	DWWG	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
2.8 CMM 03 request regarding Marine mammals, seabirds, reptiles and other species of concern					
2.8.1	Direct and indirect interactions between bottom fishing and marine mammals, seabirds, reptiles and other species of concern;	AUS/NZL	In-kind	In-kind-	In-kind
2.8.2	Develop a protocol for safely releasing sharks alive	AUS/NZL	In-kind	in-kind	N/A
2.8.4	Report results/outcomes for mitigation technologies including bird deterrent curtain, cachalotera nets on trot lines, and bird bafflers	DWWG	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind

3. Squid Working Group

Code	Activity	Coordinator	Funding		
			2026	2027	2028
3.1 Squid assessment					
3.1.1	Form a task team to conduct simulation and model evaluations for squid stock assessments	SC Chair	In-kind	In-kind	N/A
3.1.3	Squid Workshop including potential assessment techniques, abundance indices and simulated assessment; to be held in person	SQWG/ Secretariat	25k NZD	N/A	N/A
3.1.4	Develop template for monthly data, including catch, effort and CPUE	SQ WG	In-kind	N/A	N/A
3.1.5	Develop a template for biological data, including time, location, length, weight and maturity stage	SQ WG	In-kind	N/A	N/A
3.1.6	Protocol for data submission and templates management	SQ WG	In-kind	N/A	N/A
3.1.7	Review available input data and its quality to for stock assessment (report to SC14)	SQ WG	NZ$ 51k (SC 2025)	N/A	N/A
3.1.8	Perform a stock assessment to evaluate the current status of the jumbo squid fishery.	SQ WG		N/A	N/A
3.1.9	Develop an Operating Model to support MSE and other simulation work, including support for multiple phenotypes.	CHL/CHN/SQ WG		N/A	N/A
3.1.10	Extend the Operating Model to explicitly incorporate environmental effects on population dynamics, enabling research on climate change impacts.	N/A		N/A	N/A
3.1.11	Design climate-sensitive harvest control rules tailored to squid life history and the SPRFMO decision-making framework.	N/A		N/A	N/A
3.1.12	Evaluate the performance of these harvest control rules through MSE to provide robust management advice under uncertainty.	SQ WG		N/A	N/A
3.2 Squid CMM development					
3.2.1	Develop a plan for more detailed within-season fishery Monitoring depending upon the uptake of EM, etc.	SQ WG	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
3.2.2	Explore and develop alternative approaches to provide management advice if a stock assessment cannot be completed or is not suitable for management purposes.	SQ WG	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
3.3 Observer Program					
3.3.1	Review the template for recording seabird interactions and seabird abundance	NZL/SQ WG	In-kind	N/A	N/A
3.4 Squid Connectivity					
3.4.1	Collect samples for population genomic studies (Convention Area and adjacent National Jurisdiction Areas)	N/A	NZ$ 97K (CHN) +20k USD (CHN, TBD)	N/A	N/A
3.4.2	DNA Sequencing using IcWGS, for population genomics analysis Review the DNA extraction protocols and analysis pipelines to lcWGC in an online workshop with all Members interested in March-April 2026.	N/A	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
3.4.3	Provide a report with a phylogeographic analysis using the complete mitochondrial genome obtained from the lcWGS short reads, integrating data from all Members and include a review of the existing protocols.	N/A	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind

4. Ecosystems Working Group

Code	Activity	Coordinator	Funding		
			2026	2027	2028
4.1 Species distribution and preferences					
4.1.1	Analyse the habitat preferences of jack mackerel to identify environment-related changes in their distribution and abundance.	PER/CHL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
4.1.2	Workshop to review the data inventory main findings of the SDMTT and enhance data availability for spatiotemporal distribution analysis of target species, including the impact of climate change scenarios.	CHL	$25,000 NZD	N/A	N/A
4.1.3	Implement species distribution models (SDMs) for jack mackerel and jumbo squid, using retrospective data and projecting distributions under climate change scenarios.	ECO-WG Chair	N/A	In-kind	In-kind
4.1.4	Explore the implications of potential spatial and temporal shifts in species distributions for management measures under climate change scenarios	EWG chair	N/A	N/A	In-kind
4.1.5	Analyse the habitat preferences of jumbo squid to identify environment-related changes in their distribution and abundance.	PER/CHL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
4.1.6	Analyse behaviour, distribution, and abundance information about mesopelagic, euphausiids and other key species of the Humboldt Current System	PER/CHL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
4.2 Standardised oceanographic data products and modelling					
4.2.1	Integration of databases provided by different Members with linkage to a metadata repository	PER/CHL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
4.3 Ecosystem Assessment					
4.3.1	Provide ecosystem status overview for SC at seasonal to decadal scale	EWG Chair	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
4.3.2	Publication of a Special Issue of Symposium on State of the Art of Habitat Monitoring	EWG Chair	NZ$ 15k (USA)	N/A	N/A
4.4 Data collection from fishing vessels					
4.4.1	Mapping spatial-temporal population density distribution of jack mackerel using a combination of the existing acoustic survey data and acoustic information as obtained from industry vessels	PER/CHL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
4.4.2	To provide acoustic indices from fishing vessels for consideration in the data and stock assessment benchmarks of jack mackerel and chub mackerel	PER/CHL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
4.4.3	Assess the feasibility of developing regional integrated indices from acoustic surveys to support jack mackerel stock assessment	PER/CHL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind

4.5 Jack Mackerel Connectivity					
4.5.1	Workshop to identify key practical requirements and considerations for sampling approaches for progressing work on the identified priority topics (Genetics, Tagging methods, Early stages & Reproduction) including outlining possible iterative/annual changes to sampling design.	CHL / PER	N/A	25,000 NZD	N/A
4.5.2	Identify key hypotheses on connectivity and a description of how these hypotheses could be tested using the priority topics. Describe an approach for considering evidence.	CHL / PER	N/A	N/A	In-kind
4.5.3	Design a sampling programme on the four identified priority topics to generate evidence on jack mackerel connectivity.	CHL / PER	N/A	N/A	In-kind
4.5.4	Implement the designed sampling and research programme—including data analysis and reporting—on the four identified priority topics to generate evidence to support jack mackerel connectivity hypotheses.	CHL/PER	N/A	N/A	In-kind

5. Data Working Group

Code	Activity	Coordinator	Funding		
			2026	2027	2028
5.1 Data Standards					
5.1.1	Review and update data standards to ensure appropriate scientific data are collected in SPRFMO fisheries (Paragraph 8 of CMM 02-2025)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5.1.2	Prioritise data needs of Members.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5.1.3	Provide input to the Secretariat in developing improved data management infrastructure including databases, data repositories and data processing tools	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

6. Other (Crosscutting issues)

Code	Activity	Coordinator	Funding		
			2026	2027	2028
6.1 Climate Change					
6.1.1	Identify management implications of climate change on habitat and fisheries in the SPRFMO area (Decision 13-2023)	USA	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
6.2 Research in the Salas y Gomez and Nazca ridges area					
6.2.1	Provide an analysis of all fishing data within the Salas y Gomez and Nazca ridges area, including for 2024	N/A	In-kind	N/A	N/A
6.2.2	Provide an evaluation of fishing impacts for the Salas y Gomez and Nazca ridges area	N/A	In-kind	N/A	N/A
6.2.3	Undertake an analysis of observer data from all fisheries (not limited to SPRFMO if that data is available) regarding interactions with marine mammals, seabirds, reptiles and other species of concern within the Salas y Gomez and Nazca ridges area and adjacent areas	N/A	In-kind	N/A	N/A
6.2.4	Review and discuss all compiled data and information and present possible measures to SC14 for the recommendation to COMM15.	N/A	In-kind	N/A	N/A
6.3 Seabird bycatch					
6.3.1	Progress southern hemisphere quantitative risk assessment (SEFRA)	N/A	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
6.3.2	Compile and characterise existing data relevant to seabird interactions with squid jig and recommend future data collection protocols	China/Chinese Taipei/Korea/ACAP	In-kind	N/A	N/A
	Conduct trials on purse seine mitigation technologies, taking into account those described in the ACAP toolbox, and report on the outcomes of these trials including seabird bycatch rates.	Chile	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
	Summarise and characterise seabird bycatch-related data held by the Secretariat and to work with interested Members and ACAP to identify any future potential improvements to data collection and reporting processes.	Secretariat	In-kind	N/A	N/A
6.4 CMM 17 Marine pollution					
6.4.1	SC Members and CNCPs are encouraged to undertake research into marine pollution related to fisheries in the SPRFMO Convention Area to further develop and refine measures to reduce marine pollution and are encouraged to submit to the SC and the CTC any information derived from such efforts	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
6.5 Cooperation					
6.5.1	FAO ABNJ Deep Sea Fisheries: coordinate activities over their next five-year plan that could involve Member scientists and a number of SPRFMO science projects	Secretariat	In-kind	N/A	N/A
6.5.2	CPPS: Increase cooperation and collaboration between both organisations.	Secretariat	In-kind	N/A	N/A

6.6 Secretariat Scientific Support					
6.6.1	Continue with analyses of catch composition and fishing activities; support CPUE analyses; and general scientific analyses, as capacity allows.	Secretariat	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
6.7 Other crosscutting					
6.7.1	To update long version profiles (FAO species synopsis format) for jack mackerel, chub mackerel and jumbo flying squid	N/A	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
6.7.2	Development of assessments for species in the SPRFMO Convention Area that are bycaught or subject to targeted fishing operations (in line with tier-based assessment approach)	N/A	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind