

13TH MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE (FAC)

Panama City, Panama, 26 to 27 February 2026

FAC 13 – Doc 10 Developing States Fund *Secretariat*

1. Summary and Recommendations

This paper summarises the status and use of the SPRFMO Developing States (DS) Fund and recommends a 2026-27 budget allocation and review of the Fund.

The FAC is invited to:

- **Note** that the annual budget allocation for travel assistance continues to be in demand while there continues to be no applicants for technical assistance and capacity building, for which there is a balance of around \$208,000.
- **Recommend** that the Commission approve the proposed allocation of NZ\$37,000 for 'Budget Category 11 – Developing States fund' for the Financial Year 2026-27 (as per FAC13-Doc13).
- **Note** that the Financial Regulations require that the DS Fund be reviewed every 4 years and was last reviewed in 2022.
- **Recommend** that the Commission review the DS Fund in 2027 on the basis of an intersessional process.

2. Fund Purpose and Reporting

The Financial Regulations establish the DS Fund, and how it should be administered, to facilitate the effective participation of developing State Contracting Parties of the region, in particular the least developed among them, and small island developing States, and as appropriate, territories and possessions in the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, including assistance directed towards:

- a) improved conservation and management of the fishery resources and the development of fisheries for such resources
- b) building capacity in key areas such as monitoring, control and surveillance, compliance and enforcement, data collection, verification and analysis, stock assessment and scientific research
- c) Participation in the meeting of the Commission and the Compliance and Technical Committee meetings and workshops of the Scientific Committee

(Convention Article 19, paragraph 5; Financial Regulation 5 and Annex 1 paragraph 1).

The Executive Secretary is required to 'report the status of the Fund, the amount used to provide assistance for the development of technical capacity and details of such assistance, together with the level of available funds, during the annual session of the Commission'.



3. Fund Use

It continues to be the case the no application has been made to access the Fund for technical assistance and capacity-building (paragraph 1 a) and b)). The Fund has been used every year since 2015 to support developing State Members to participate in the Commission's annual meetings and Scientific Committee's workshops/meetings (paragraph 1 c).

The budget allocation of \$35,000 for 2025-26 (Category 11 Developing States Fund) was administered and allocated according to the Financial Regulations, including the guidelines (Annex 1 paragraph 5) that maximum 60% shall be allocated for participation in the annual meeting of the Commission and maximum 40% shall be allocated for participation in the meeting or workshops of the Scientific Committee:

- 13th Scientific Committee meeting, NZ\$14,000, (two Members supported from three applications (one applicant withdrew))
- 14th Commission meeting, NZ\$21,000 (three Members supported from three applications).

4. Fund Status

Table 1 provides an annual breakdown of the DS Fund budget allocations, use and balance up to the end of the current financial year. Key points to note are:

- The balance at the end of the 2024-25 financial year was \$199 354.
- The estimated balance at the end of the 2025-26 financial year is \$208 696. This is available for technical assistance and capacity building.

Table 1: Status of the Developing States Fund

Financial Year	Budget Allocation NZ\$	Meeting/Workshop	Member Supported	NZ\$	Balance NZ\$
2015-16	18 000	4 th Commission Meeting	Cook Islands	6 130	9 697
			Cuba	2 173	
			Total expense for FY		8 303
2016-17	20 000	5 th Commission Meeting	Cuba	1 555	18 420
			Peru	6 000	
			Vanuatu	3 722	
			Total expense for FY		11 277
2017-18	15 000	6 th Commission Meeting	Cuba	1 430	18 415
			Vanuatu	10 458	
		6 th SC Workshop	Ecuador	3 117	
			Total expense for FY		15 005
2018-19	20 000	6 th SC Meeting	Cook Islands	7 040	112
			Ecuador	3 540	
			Peru	7 510	
		7 th Commission Meeting	Cook Islands	5 196	
			Cuba	4 730	
			Ecuador	4 957	
			Peru	5 330	
			Total expense for FY		38 303
	30 000	7 th SC Meeting	Cook Islands	7 925	10 667
			Ecuador	2 435	
		8 th Commission Meeting	Cuba	5 050	
			Peru	4 035	
			Total expense for FY		19 445



Financial Year	Budget Allocation NZ\$	Meeting/Workshop	Member Supported	NZ\$	Balance NZ\$
2020-21	55 965 ¹	No travel due to COVID19		0	
		Total expense for FY		0	66 632 ²
2021-22	35 000	SC Jack Mackerel Stock Assessment Benchmark Workshop	Ecuador	9 850	
	80 831 ³				
		Total expense for FY		9 850	172 847
2022-23	35 000	SC Jack Mackerel Stock Assessment Benchmark Workshop	Ecuador (Final payment a 2021-22 appropriation)	2 421	
		10 th SC Meeting	Ecuador	6 065	
			Peru	14 005	
		11 th Commission Meeting	Cook Islands	7 854	
			Panama	6 119	
			Peru	3 072	
			Total expense for FY	39 536	
			Plus, interest income	2 583	170 894
2023-24	35 000	11 th SC Meeting	Ecuador	5 002	
			Peru	5 012	
			Belize	3 579	
		12 th Commission Meeting	Panama	2 985	
			Peru	2 584	
			Total expense for FY	19 162	
			Plus, interest income	4 887	191 619
2024-25	35000	12 th SC Meeting	Ecuador	2 545	
			Peru	9 132	
		13 th Commission Meeting	Cook Islands	11 362	
			Cuba	1 013	
			Panama	4 007	
			Peru	3 706	
			Total expense for FY	31 765	
			Plus, interest income	4 500	199 354
2025-26	35000	13 th SC Meeting	Ecuador	4 691	
			Peru	4 680	
		14 th Commission Meeting (Committed)	Cook Islands	9 700	
			Peru	5 512	
			Cuba	2 000	
			Total expense for FY	26 583	
			Plus, interest income (up to 31 Dec 2025)	926	
			Estimated Balance as of 30 June 2026		208 696
		Total Support		219 230	

¹ USA voluntary contribution as per 2020-21 Budget (COMM8-Report Annex 6d)

² As per Financial Regulation (2019) 2.4 (which capped the DS Fund at NZ\$30k), and the FAC8 Recommended to exceptionally carry forward NZ\$36,632 for the DS Fund into 2021-22.

³ Transfer from Special Requirement Fund as decided by COMM10.



5. Budget Allocation

Financial Regulation 2.6 requires that the draft budget includes an item specifying the costs required to finance the travel and subsistence for one representative from each developing State Contracting Party in the region.

It is proposed that the allocation for the DS Fund be **NZ\$37,000** for financial year 2026-27. This would be a 5.5% increase on the annual NZ\$35,000 allocation since 2021-2022 to allow for inflation.

6. Fund Review

The Secretariat established an account in 2017 for the DS Fund pursuant to the Financial Regulations. Financial Regulation 2.5 further provides that the Commission will review the 'Developing States' budget category at least once every four years.

The budget category appropriation is reviewed every year as part of the annual budget process in FAC and Commission.

SPRFMO has run two intersessional processes to address developing States' capacity-building needs. An intersessional working group to address accessibility for capacity building was initiated in May 2019 but then cancelled in July 2019 due to low levels of interest in joining the working group (as per letter G51-2019). The Working Group on Identification of Capacity Building Needs initiated later in August 2019 was similarly suspended due to lack of participation.

In 2022 the FAC9 and COMM10 meetings reviewed and reformed the Fund (see FAC9 Doc8_Rev1). Key features include:

- the DS Fund operates as a trust fund (as per other RFMOs that operate similar funds), which fundamentally recognises that these funds are to be used only for specific purposes.
- the cap limiting unspent appropriations was removed to enhance the effective utilisation of the DS Fund, noting the four-year review clause.
- any unspent budget appropriations are retained in the DS Fund so that they are then available for technical assistance and capacity-building (paragraph 1 a) and b)).

It is timely for FAC to consider recommending that the Commission review the DS Fund at its next annual meeting in 2027. This could be on the basis of an intersessional process. Given the challenges with previous intersessional processes, FAC may wish to consider how to ensure the viability of a review process and the response to the 2nd Performance Review which identified the utilisation of the DS Fund as an area for consideration. Options may include:

- a Member-led working group
- a Secretariat report to FAC14 on the implementation of the fund, including where it is effective and room for improvement, based on its experience and a survey of members
- engaging an external consultant to review, which would require additional budget or a voluntary contribution.