

Roadmap for the Scientific Committee

Article 10 of the SPRFMO Convention establishes the Scientific Committee (SC), whose functions are, in summary, to:

- (a) plan, conduct and review scientific assessments of the status of fishery resources;
- (b) provide advice and recommendations to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies based on such assessments;
- (c) provide advice and recommendations to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies on the impact of fishing on the marine ecosystems in the Convention Area;
- (d) encourage and promote cooperation in scientific research; and
- (e) provide such other scientific advice to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies as it considers appropriate.

The Science Working Group (SWG) established by the Preparatory Conference for the SPRFMO developed a Research Programme which is part of the Report of the 11th Science Working Group held in 2012. The Commission endorses this programme and requests the Scientific Committee to prioritise activities and regularly update this programme. Collaboration between different organizations, Members and Non-Members is fundamental to develop research.

The Commission also endorses the recommendations of the SWG regarding the following matters of procedure, as needed:

- a) To set up a Stock Assessment Working Group (SAG).
- b) To extend the duration of the future Scientific Committee meetings to a total of 7 days in order to accommodate the work of the SAG;
- c) To elaborate a protocol for delivering information and documents to the Scientific Committee, considering a minimum of 30 days for the submission of that information and documents in order to allow the Committee a time for review.

Regarding the scientific advice for 2014 on Jack Mackerel stock status, the Commission endorses the short term priorities as defined in the report of the 11th SWG Meeting. In addition to these priorities, the Commission requests the Scientific Committee to:

- a) Update and further develop the stock assessment of Jack Mackerel based on the agreed methods from the SWG;
- b) Continue the work on evaluating alternative hypotheses on Jack mackerel stock population structure and consequences of alternative management approaches. In this context, and pending more conclusive findings on the stock population structure of Jack Mackerel, continue and expand the stock assessment work under both the stock hypotheses considered in the 11th SWG Meeting;
- c) Recommend biologically-based target and limit reference points or their proxies, including the values associated with maximum sustainable yield (MSY). If analyses are incomplete then interim target and limit reference points (or proxies) should be provided.

- d) Consider a range of exploitation levels and present the probabilities that the spawning stock biomass will reach target and limit reference points in 2015, and also 10 and 20 years into the future. In the absence of a target reference point, provisional values shall be used.
- e) Elaborate and evaluate other conservation measures (beyond catch limits) to the Commission that could be adopted as part of a rebuilding plan for jack mackerel.

Regarding the impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem and the Ecosystem Approach to fisheries management, the Commission requests the SC:

- f) To evaluate the impact of fishing activities on Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) described in the Convention area and on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) identified by the Scientific Committee within the Area of the Convention.
- g) To review international best practices in bycatch and incidental catches (seabirds, marine mammals and reptiles) mitigation options in pelagic and bottom fisheries and make the appropriate recommendations.
- h) To review the standards for data collection and reporting, and for observer coverage to ensure a full understanding of the nature and extent of bycatch interactions across all fisheries.

The Commission requests the Members and Non Members to provide the necessary experts to the SC to address this roadmap and its specific requests.