

**Report of the Intersessional Meeting of Panel 1 on
Tropical Tunas Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE)**
(Online, 8 October 2025)

1. Opening of the meeting and meeting arrangements

Mr Emmanuel Kwame Dovlo, Chair of Panel 1, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. The ICCAT Assistant Executive Secretary, Dr Miguel Neves dos Santos, welcomed the participants and thanked the work done by the SCRS and the ICCAT contractors on the two tropical tuna MSE processes. He explained the virtual meeting arrangements.

2. Appointment of the Rapporteur

The Secretariat was appointed as Rapporteur.

3. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes and is attached as **Appendix 1**.

The List of participants is included as **Appendix 2**.

The Assistant Executive Secretary introduced the 18 CPCs participating at the meeting. In addition, one Cooperating Non-contracting party, entity, fishing entity also attended the meeting: Chinese Taipei.

One Intergovernmental Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) attended the meeting as Observers, and the Brazilian Association of Fish Industries (ABIPESCA), the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), the Pew Charitable Trusts (PEW) the Marine Sciences and Cooperation Association (SCIAENA), and the Ocean Foundation, participated as Non-governmental Organizations.

4. Western skipjack MSE

Dr Rodrigo Sant'Ana presented the status of the western skipjack (SKJ-W) MSE process, and the work done during 2025. Dr Sant'Ana described the development of the SKJ-W MSE, recalling its timeline, and the input updates of catch, size samples of catch and indices of abundance until 2023. It was indicated that the SKJ-W MSE has been retuned to the new data, and all candidate management procedures (CMPs) were reevaluated in 2025. Four alternative CMPs were presented, two empirical (Constant Exploitation (CE) and Index Ratio (IR)) and two model-based (Surplus Production with linear (SP) harvest control rule and Surplus production model with non-linear harvest control rule (SPAH)). All CMPs passed the Management Objectives specified in the [Recommendation by ICCAT on a candidate management procedure for western Atlantic skipjack tuna \(Rec. 24-04\)](#). Main differences in CMP results were the annual trend in the long-term projections (30 yr), with all reaching the 60% or above probability of maintaining the stock in the green quadrant of the Kobe plot (PGK) objective by the end of the projection, but for some CMPs falling below 60% PGK in the beginning of long period.

Robustness tests were also done in 2025, simulating potential changes in the environment that affect the productivity of the stock by either increasing the variability in recruitment (50% higher), or by assuming trends (positive and negative) of recruitment in the long-term projections. Finally, the Total allowable Catch (TAC) for the first period of the implementation of the Management Procedure (MP) (2026-2028) were provided for each of the CMPs, noting the relative minor differences on TACs between CMPs. The results using an interactive communication tool, called [Slick Shiny app](#) were also presented, indicating its availability on the web with the latest results of the SKJ-W MSE (under "Select Case Study", choose "Western Atlantic skipjack").

It was noted that the SCRS reviewed and endorsed this presentation and results of the SKJ-W MSE during its annual 2025 Plenary meeting.

The Chair thanked Dr Sant'Ana for the presentation and the SKJ-W MSE Technical Team for their efforts and scientific products. CPCs congratulated the scientific team and the SCRS for its efforts. The Brazilian delegation expressed its gratitude to their national scientists and highlighted on the socio-economic importance of the skipjack fisheries in his country and the goals for implementing the SKJ-W MSE in 2026 to assure a sustainable and well managed resource.

CPCs inquired about the possible interaction of the SKJ-W fisheries with other tunas' species, in particular yellowfin and bigeye tuna and their consideration within the proposed SKJ-W MSE. Scientists indicated that a large percentage (90% or above) of historical catches of SKJ-W are from a single fishery/fleet (baitboat) that targets this species and have minimal catches of YFT/BET compared to the eastern Atlantic tropical tuna fisheries. Therefore, it is expected that the SKJ-W MSE will have minimal effects or none on the TAC recommendations or allocations of YFT/BET or the multi-stock MSE in development. The development of the Exceptional Circumstances protocol (ECP), planned for 2026, will offer alternative management measures if significant changes in species distribution or fisheries affecting the SKJ-W stock are detected that were not considered within the current SKJ-W MSE framework.

A CPC proposed that Panel 1 should consider reducing the number of CMPs in advance of the discussions of the annual Commission meeting. To address this, an elimination process was suggested due to the similar performance among the four CMPs discussed. This approach could also consider how CMPs might perform if future data is limited, for example when abundance indices are missing. The USA delegation proposed removing the CE and SP CMPs. Other CPCs indicated that they would need more time to thoroughly review and discuss alternative CMPs and prefer to bring proposals to the Commission meeting instead, indicating that although all CMPs respond to the Management Objectives of [Rec. 24-04](#), it is important to consider other risk factors when adopting a management recommendation.

The Brazilian delegation acknowledged and welcomed the Climate Change related robustness test indicating that this feature is recently seen in the western South Atlantic where their main SKJ-W fisheries operate.

The Chair inquired about the workplan for ECP development in 2026. The MSE Technical Team indicated that provided the Commission adopts an MP in 2025, the development of the ECP would require active communication between managers and scientists and expect interactions with Panel 1 in 2026. To this it was inquired if the development of an ECP requires the adoption of an MP. Dr. Rodrigo Sant'Ana explained that, as per standard ICCAT MSE procedures, ECPs are typically developed once the Commission has adopted a specific MP.

Brazil emphasized the importance of collaborating with other CPCs to identify the MPs that promote sustainable exploitation, considering the aspects of social, economic and environmental. The country supports options that allow for smoother and more predictable adjustments over time, benefiting both fisheries and stock sustainability. Recognizing the complexity of science-based decision-making, Brazil expressed its commitment to actively engage in this process and highlighted its interest in having an MP adopted at the Commission Meeting in November 2025.

The SCRS Vice-chair congratulated the SKJ-W MSE development team and invited CPCs to contact the SCRS if they have any questions or concerns about the material provided ahead of the annual Commission meeting.

5. Tropical tunas multi-stock MSE

Dr. Gorka Merino presented an update on multi-stock MSE development for 2025, noting significant progress in the framework, including OMs and CMPs aligned with the [Resolution by ICCAT on interim operational management objectives for Atlantic bigeye tuna, yellowfin tuna, and the eastern stock of skipjack tuna \(Res. 24-02\)](#), which set interim management objectives for BET, YFT, and SKJ-E stocks. The presentation reported all stocks as sustainable, with recent catch increases for YFT and SKJ, and a higher TAC for BET. The proposed CMP uses single-species HCRs, where the most restrictive stock dictates fishing

effort and catches for the others, making it impossible to reach the TAC for all three simultaneously in the simulations. However, the advice that will be given to the Commission will be based on the TACs estimated by each one for the MP for the three stocks.

The participants thanked Dr Merino and the MSE Technical Team for the presentation and progress on the multi-stock MSE. It was noted the importance of focusing on the multi-fleet consideration for this MSE, to understand the process and on the productivity of the fisheries for the CPCs. It was noted that the distribution of catch among fleets shouldn't be based on the historical catch series, the developers indicated that in the OM of the multi-stock MSE the fleets represent main gear fleet fishing operations (purse seine, longline, baitboat, etc.) and not national or CPC fleets. The MSE should be oriented to restrict the catch to the biological characteristics of the most vulnerable stock, however there are other factors to be considered when making management decisions by the Commission.

It was inquired whether under the current workplan the expectation of an adoption of the multi-stock MSE MP is viable for 2027, and if the SCRS is expecting specific guidance from the COM in 2026. Dr Merino informed the Panel that the development is on track and expects to present results in 2026 to the SCRS and the Commission. No specific recommendations are anticipated for 2025 because interim operational objectives were already set in 2024. The workplan for 2026 stresses the importance of effective dialogue with managers and the SCRS to progress on the trade-offs for the multi-stock CMPs development and application. It was requested that an overall maximum sustainable yield (MSY) be estimated to better evaluate the alternative trade-offs among fleet/gear allocations and how these will by affect the "optimal" MSY value.

It was inquired if the TACs provided to the Commission under the current multi-stock MSE have considered the interaction among stocks and if one reached a given TAC (i.e. the most restrictive stock), the fishery will be closed. The modeler team indicated that TACs will be provided for each stock and there is the possibility of modifying the fishing effort of the fleets. The need to consider alternatives to the single stock delimiting factor for the fisheries, was suggested, and the need for more clarity on the management measures apply under this MSE. It was clarified that [Res. 24-02](#) is an interim measure and Panel 1 can make more specific recommendations including the consideration of alternative management objectives. The SCRS indicated that in 2024 they have already presented a document with alternatives in terms of management objectives including, for example, a proposal for 0.8*MSY as target objective.

The Chair inquired on future developments of the multi-stock MSE and the workplan for 2026. The modelers team indicated the following items:

- Evaluate alternative management objectives.
- Evaluate scenarios of alternative allocation of catch between gears.
- Evaluate empirical CMPs (including constant catch).
- Add realism to simulations with flexibility on effort constraints.
- Run MSE as if they were three stocks with no technical interactions.
- Focus on trade-offs between management objectives.
- Explore options to increase global MSY for each one of the stocks.

It was highlighted that understanding the complex assumptions under this MSE is important for the decision making of the Commission.

6. Other matters

No other matters were discussed.

7. Adoption of the report and closure

The Panel agreed to a process for adopting the report by correspondence.

The Chair thanked the Secretariat, the SCRS, the interpreters, the Rapporteur, and the participants for their hard work and contributions to the meeting and adjourned the meeting.

Appendix 1

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting and meeting arrangements
2. Appointment of Rapporteur
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Western skipjack MSE
 - 4.1 Review of the progress made by the SCRS in 2025
 - 4.2 CMPs and their performance results
5. Tropical tunas multi-stock MSE
 - 5.1 Review of the progress made by the SCRS in 2025
 - 5.2 Multi-stock MSE workplan and discussion on where the SCRS is seeking additional guidance from Panel 1
6. Other matters
7. Adoption of the report and closure

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