
13TH MEETING OF THE SPRFMO SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Wellington, New Zealand, 8 to 1 September 2025

SC 13 – Doc 05

Scientific Committee Multi-Annual Plan 2026-2028

Secretariat

Introduction

The SPRFMO Scientific Committee Multiannual Workplan contains the activities, timelines, and funding priorities for the short- and medium-term work of the Scientific Committee. It is an instrument of strategic coordination between the Scientific Committee and the Commission; it serves as a reference for the Scientific Committee’s work throughout the intersessional period and provides the basis for Commission approval and support.

Following recommendations from the Performance Review Panel and subsequent discussions, the workplan has been reorganised on a **3-year planning cycle**. This allows the Commission to approve the Scientific Committee’s activities and budget allocations over multiple years, providing greater predictability, stability, and autonomy of execution. While the cycle provides the long-term framework, activities may still be updated annually to reflect emerging priorities or new opportunities. If new activities arise during the course of a cycle, they may either be added to the current cycle when urgent, or scheduled for the following cycle when they can be planned more strategically. This approach provides a balance between predictability for the Commission and flexibility for the Scientific Committee.

A proposed multiannual workplan is prepared by the Scientific Committee during its meeting and included as an annex within the SC meeting report. It is then put forward as a meeting document to the Commission for consideration, relevant amendments, and ultimately adoption. The workplan adopted by the Commission is then published as a standalone Annex to the meeting report and guides the immediate intersessional and forward-looking work of the Scientific Committee.

The following tables associate each identified task with its execution years, coordinator, and funding source, noting that:

- For the purposes of the SC Workplan, a “year” corresponds to the *intersessional period* between two annual meetings of the Scientific Committee. For example, the year **2026** covers the period from **October 2025 to August 2026**, i.e. between **SC13** and **SC14**.
- Under the **Funding columns (2026, 2027, 2028)**, the budget requirements (if any) are indicated for each year of the cycle. A notation of “In-kind” signifies that the work will be carried out by Members without requiring additional financial resources.
- The column labelled **Coordinator** identifies the Member delegation(s) (in some cases the Secretariat or Chairperson) assigned to ensure that progress towards the task is made intersessionally. Where no delegation has been identified, the task is a responsibility of the SC as a whole.
- Multi-year activities are indicated by entries spanning more than one year in the table. At the end of each cycle, the workplan may be updated to include new tasks or extend ongoing ones into the following cycle.



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			
1.2.2	Finalise a recommendation on Management Procedures	SC			
1.3 Jack Mackerel Connectivity					
1.3.1	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.	EU / CHL / PER			
1.3.2	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.	EU / CHL / PER			
1.3.1	Design and undertake a sampling and research programme (including data analysis and reporting) across the 4 combined identified high priority topics <i>Genetics</i> , <i>Tagging methods</i> and <i>Reproduction / Early Stages</i> , to evidence jack mackerel connectivity.	EU / CHL / PER	\$75,000 NZD Matched in-kind funding & seeking of industry funding	\$75,000 NZD Matched in-kind funding & seeking of industry funding	\$75,000 NZD Matched in-kind funding & seeking of industry funding
1.4 Jack Mackerel Ageing Techniques					
1.4.1	Workshop to evaluate methodologies for implementation in age readings in otoliths of jack mackerel (<i>T. murphyi</i>) among the age and growth laboratories of the SPRFMO .	CHL, PER	In-kind	-	-
1.5 Chub mackerel					
1.5.1	Organize a data compilation workshop to compile an overview on catch, catch distribution, mixing densities in the JM fishery, life history characteristics and independent survey estimates on chub mackerel	CHL, PER	\$45,000 NZD (EU ~24k EUR)	-	-



2. Deepwater Working Group

Code	Activity	Coordinator	Funding		
			2026	2027	2028
2.1 Orange roughy assessment					
2.1.1	Explore alternative stock assessment models	NZL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
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 (<i>intersessional consideration</i>)	NZL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
2.2 Deep water stock structure					
2.2.1	Review the list for deepwater stock structure analyses based on assessment for non-orange roughy stocks		In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
2.2.2	Develop workplan to drive stock structure delineation studies for orange roughy and alfonsino and other key target species	NZL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
2.2.3	Investigate the stock structure of orange roughy on the Westpac Bank and adjacent New Zealand EEZ	NZL	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	In-kind	-	-
2.3.2	Develop a tier-based assessment framework for all DW stocks and recommend relevant reference points and/or management rules for these stocks	AUS	In-kind	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	Further Investigations are required to establish whether bioregions may provide an additional spatial scale for evaluating the performance of spatial management measures	NZL	In-kind	-	-
2.4.3	Assess the feasibility and develop a research programme within the SPRFMO Convention Area to allow the determination of taxon-specific estimates of catchability for VME indicator taxa.	NZL	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	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
2.5.2	For VME taxa potentially at risk of SAI, improve and validate abundance models, using independent data	NZL	In-kind	-	-
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	In-kind
2.5.4	Complete Cumulative BFIAS. Standing item	AUS/NZL	In-kind	-	-
2.5.5	Derive an SAI threshold from an empirical study tailored to the dRBS approach	NZL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
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	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind



2.6.2	Review all reported VME encounters	NZL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
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	-	-
2.8.2	Any recommended spatial or temporal closures or spatially/temporally limited gear prohibitions for any identified hotspots of these species	AUS/NZL	In-kind	-	-
2.8.3	Any recommended bycatch limits and/or measures for an encounter protocol for any of these species	AUS/NZL	-	-	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	-
3.1.2	Design and evaluate MSE and harvest control rules	SQ WG	-	In-kind	In-kind
3.1.3	Squid Workshop including potential assessment techniques, abundance indices and simulated assessment; to be held in person	SQWG/ Secretariat	25k NZD	-	-
3.1.4	Develop template for monthly data, including catch, effort and CPUE	SQ WG	In-kind		
3.1.5	Develop a template for biological data, including time, location, length, weight and maturity stage	SQ WG	In-kind		
3.1.6	Protocol for data submission and templates management	SQ WG	In-kind		
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			
3.3 Observer Program					
3.3.1	Provide advice on the appropriate level of observer coverage in the jumbo flying squid fishery				
3.4 Squid Connectivity					
3.4.1	Collect samples for population genomic studies (Convention Area and adjacent National Jurisdiction Areas)		NZ\$ 97K (CHN) +20k USD (CHN, TBD)		
3.4.2	DNA Sequencing using IcWGS, for population genomics analysis		In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
3.4.3	Provide a single report describing the genetic diversity based on mtDNA ND2 gene marker, integrating data from all members and include a review of the existing protocol		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	Characterise jack mackerel habitat	PER/CHL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
4.1.2	Explore the concept of jack mackerel habitat under an interdisciplinary ontogeny approach for jack mackerel and other species (by life history stages and regions)	PER/CHL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
4.1.3	Analyse the habitat preferences of jumbo squid	PER/CHL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
4.1.4	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
4.1.5	Analysis and modelling of the spatial distribution and habitat preferences of jack mackerel and chub mackerel, showing its relationship with the environment and impacts of climate change to changes in its distribution.	PER/CHL	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
4.1.6	Prediction of seasonal distribution patterns and interannual variability of Jack Mackerel spatial distribution	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		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)	-	-
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	To assess the feasibility of developing a regional integrated index based on acoustic surveys to inform the jack mackerel stock assessment	PER/CHL	In-kind	In-kind	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)				
5.1.2	Prioritise data needs of Members.				
5.1.3	Provide input to the Secretariat in developing improved data management infrastructure including databases, data repositories and data processing tools				



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 Nazca and Salas y Gomez ridges area					
6.2.1	Form a task team to review and discuss the data and present possible measures to SC13.				
6.3 Seabird bycatch					
6.3.1	Progress southern hemisphere quantitative risk assessment (SEFRA)		In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
6.3.2	Convene a workshop to prioritize and draft amendments to CMMs 02 and 09 based on the review carried out by ACAP and the best-practice advice provided (SC11-Obs04)	NZL/PER	In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
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				
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				
6.5.2	CPPS: Increase cooperation and collaboration between both organisations.				
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	Evaluate impacts of fishing activities in EBSA		In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
6.7.2	To update long version profiles (FAO species synopsis format) for jack mackerel, chub mackerel and jumbo flying squid		In-kind	In-kind	In-kind
6.7.3	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)		In-kind	In-kind	In-kind