



Western and
Central Pacific
Fisheries
Commission

TO ALL COMMISSION MEMBERS, COOPERATING NON-MEMBERS,
PARTICIPATING TERRITORIES AND OBSERVERS

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Date: 13 February 2024
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Letter from the FADMO-IWG Chair

Dear All,

As requested, I am circulating a self-explanatory letter from the Chair of the FAD Management Options Intersessional Working Group (FADMO-IWG). Any response to the enclosed letter may be directed to the Chair, Mr Jamel James (jamel.james@norma.fm), with a copy to the Secretariat (elaine.garvilles@wcpfc.int).

Kindly distribute this Circular to relevant parties.

Sincerely,

Rhea Moss-Christian
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

12 February 2024

Dear FADMO IWG Colleagues,

I hope this email finds you well and energized for another busy year this 2024!

At WCPFC20 there were various tasks assigned to the FADMO-IWG, noting paragraphs 52 – 53 and 56 of WCPFC20 Outcomes Document.

I would like to start the FADMO-IWG activities for this year and I have initiated this by identifying priority tasks for 2024 - 2026. I prepared our tentative work plan and agenda for 2024 - 2026, for your consideration (**Attachment A and B**).

Agenda 10.2(d)(iii) – Update on Progress in FADMO-IWG

52. *The Commission further tasked the FADMO-IWG to consider ways to implement FAD recovery programs/strategies, including economic aspects and standards required for programs to be effective, to be a standing agenda item for the FADMO-IWG in 2024.*

53. *In the development of 2024-2026 FADMO-IWG Workplan, the FADMO-IWG shall incorporate the following:*
 - a. *Provide advice to WCPFC23 on the implementation of stepwise introduction of biodegradable dFADs;*
 - b. *Provide advice to WCPFC23 on the effectiveness of the limit on the number of dFADs deployed as set in paragraph 21 of the CMM 2023-01; and*
 - c. *To develop a FAD logbook for vessel operators and to review the IWG workplan accordingly to action recent developments.*

Adoption of CMM 2023-01

56. *The Commission tasked the FADMO-IWG to consider requirements for the transmission of satellite buoy data from drifting FADs in 2024 to promote effective and sustainable FAD management in the WCPFC.*

I also would like to consider the latest FADMO-IWG contact list in **Attachment C**, as I intend to reconvene our activities through email communications initially and might consider having an online meeting (if needed) and a physical meeting (back-to-back with TCC in 2024 and/or 2025). If you intend to make changes (e.g. addition/deletion) to the attached list for your organization, please inform me (jamel.james@norma.fm) and copy the Secretariat (elaine.garvilles@wcpfc.int) as soon as convenient. If you have any questions or clarifications, please don't hesitate to contact me.

I also request the Secretariat to circulate this letter to CCMs and Observers for their information.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jamel James
FADMO-IWG Chair

FADMO-IWG Work Plan 2024 – 2026

| Timeline ¹ | Activities | Responsibility | Notes |
|---|--|--------------------------------|---|
| January – February 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify priority tasks for 2024 as instructed by the Commission. Send circular to CCMs and Observers to gather comments on the draft FADMO-IWG Workplan prepared by the FADMO-IWG Chair including updating of FADMO-IWG members' contact list | FADMO-IWG Chair, Secretariat | |
| March 2024 - December 2026 July 2024 – December 2024 | I. Satellite Buoy Data Transmission Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider requirements for the transmission of satellite buoy data from drifting FADs in 2024 to promote effective and sustainable FAD management in the WCPFC (<i>paragraph 56, WCPFC20 Outcomes Document</i>) Prepare document for consideration of SC20, TCC20 and Commission including items II to V | FADMO-IWG, SC, TCC, Commission | |
| March 2024 - December 2026 | II. FAD Recovery Programs/Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider ways to implement FAD recovery programs/strategies, including economic aspects and standards required for programs to be effective (<i>paragraph 52, WCPFC20 Outcomes Document</i>) | FADMO-IWG, SC, TCC, Commission | CMM 2023-01 22. (1) CCMs shall also encourage their flag vessels to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) responsibly manage the number of drifting FADs deployed each year; (b) carry equipment on board to facilitate the retrieval of lost drifting FADs; (c) make reasonable efforts to retrieve lost drifting FADs; (d) report the loss of drifting FADs to CCM fisheries authorities, and if the loss occurred in the EEZ of a coastal |

¹ Will be updated annually

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| | | | <p>State, also report the loss to the coastal State concerned; and</p> <p>(e) initiate retrieval programs for lost, abandoned or stranded FADs through cooperative initiatives among fishing vessels or other vessels implementing programmes for the recovery of such FADs.</p> <p>(2) CCMs are encouraged to report annually to the Commission on the effort to implement each item of this paragraph 22(1).</p> <p>(3) The FADMO IWG shall consider any information provided by CCMs on their implementation of paragraph 22(1) to enable the development of recommendations to TCC and the Commission on lost, abandoned, or stranded dFADs in 2025.</p> |
| March 2024 – December 2026 | <p>III. FAD logbook²</p> <p>Consider relevant information/materials to develop the WCPFC FAD logbook for vessel operators (<i>paragraph 53c, WCPFC20 Outcomes Document</i>)</p> | FADMO-IWG, SC, TCC, Commission | <p>References: SC19-ST-WP-05, IATTC FAD logbook</p> <p>SC19 Outcomes Document paragraphs 14 – 17:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>SC19 recognized the scientific value of the PNA's proposal on "Minimum Data Fields to be Recorded by WCPFC Vessel Operators" (SC19-ST-WP-05).</i> • <i>Noting the current workload of observers, and some FAD data may be more effectively provided by vessel operators, SC19 agreed on the need for developing a FAD logbook for vessel operators as a priority.</i> • <i>SC19 noted that the PNA has developed the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the provision of FAD data by vessel operators for licensed vessels from January 2022 and IATTC has also adopted a FAD logbook, currently used for vessels operating in the EPO and in the overlap area. SC19 noted both could be used as the basis for discussion at FADMO-IWG.</i> |

² PNA+TK suggestion that the FADMO-IWG meet physically no later than 2025 but preferably in 2024.

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| | | | <p><i>SC19 recommended that WCPFC20 consider this work to be progressed intersessionally within the FADMO-IWG.</i></p> |
| <p>March 2024 - December 2026</p> | <p>IV. Biodegradable FADs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider ways for the implementation of the stepwise introduction of bio-degradable dFADs (<i>paragraph 53a, WCPFC20 Outcomes Document</i>) | <p>FADMO-IWG, SC, TCC, Commission</p> | <p>CMM 2023-01</p> <p>20. The Commission no later than its 2026 annual session, based on specific guidelines defined by the FAD Management Options Intersessional Working Group and advice from SC and TCC, shall consider the adoption of measures on the implementation of biodegradable material on FADs.</p> <p>SC19 Outcomes Document paragraphs 212 – 215:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>SC19 recommended that the FADMO-IWG and TCC review the timelines for the stepwise introduction of biodegradable dFADs considering the expected outcomes of projects related to the design, cost-effectiveness and performance of biodegradable dFADs (e.g. jelly FADs) in the WCPO and other oceans.</i> <i>SC19 viewed that moving to biodegradable FADs is important for reducing marine pollution and other impacts. However, SC19 noted that it is challenging for some CCMs, especially for purse seine operators that are going through a major process of eliminating netting in FADs, to meet the non-entangling requirement for 2024 and further noted that trials for biodegradable FADs are still ongoing. In this regard SC19 noted that, for some CCMs, the year 2025 to start the transition to biodegradable FADs implementation may not be viable.</i> <i>SC19 noted IATTC's biodegradable FAD implementation program, which includes timelines with the mandatory use of categories IV to III(b)/III(a) by 2026 (Table FAD-1³); and categories I to II by 2029,</i> |

³ Refer to Table FAD-1 below

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| | | | <p><i>which could be reviewed by TCC and the FADMO IWG for consideration in the WCPO.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>SC19 recommended the FADMO IWG and TCC consider incentivising the use of biodegradable dFADs</i> |
| March 2024 - December 2026 | <p>V. DFAD Deployment⁴</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice to WCPFC23 on the effectiveness of the limit on the number of dFADs deployed as set in paragraph [21] of the CMM 2023-01 (<i>paragraph 53b, WCPFC20 Outcomes Document</i>) | FADMO-IWG, SC, TCC, Commission | <p>CMM 2023-01</p> <p>21. A flag CCM shall ensure that each of its purse seine vessels shall have deployed at sea, at any one time, no more than 350 drifting Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) with activated instrumented buoys. An instrumented buoy is defined as a buoy with a clearly marked reference number allowing its identification and equipped with a satellite tracking system to monitor its position. The buoy shall be activated exclusively on board the vessel. A flag CCM shall ensure that its vessels operating in the waters of a coastal State comply with the laws of that coastal State relating to FAD management, including FAD tracking.</p> <p>23. The Commission no later than 2026 based on consideration of the FAD Management Options Working Group shall review the effectiveness of the limit on the number of FADs deployed as set out in paragraph 21 and whether the current limit of 350, or any limit, is appropriate and provide advice on the monitoring of FADs.</p> <p>SC19 Outcomes Document paragraphs 220 and 222:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>SC19 recommended that options should be developed by the FADMO IWG and TCC for reporting the number of active buoys per vessel (paragraph 21 of CMM 2021-01); and to develop processes to i) report the number of dFADs and buoys deployed and retrieved per year; ii) report lost and abandoned dFAD; and iii) to</i> |

⁴ PNA+TK proposal to ensure that all drifting FAD Buoys were activated and transmitting position data when in the waters of the WCPFC Convention Area.

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| | | | <p><i>eventually abandon and deactivate buoy communication (paragraph 22 of CMM 2021-01).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>SC19 recommended that options for increased FAD detection and retrieval should be considered, including economic aspects and standards required for programs to be effective. SC19 recommended that a FAD recovery program/strategy be an agenda item for the FADMO IWG.</i> |
| September 2024 and/or September 2025 | VI. Physical Meeting | FADMO-IWG | Physical meeting of the FADMO-IWG was suggested to be back-to-back with TCC, in 2025 at the latest. |

TABLE FAD-1: Preliminary categories of drifting FADs biodegradability levels (from non-biodegradable to 100% biodegradable) for the gradual implementation of biodegradable drifting FADs. *In year X, FADs of either category III(a) (biodegradable tail) or/and category III(b) (biodegradable raft) are required/implemented simultaneously.*

| Categories ⁵ | Potential Timeline (Suggestion 1) | Potential Timeline (Suggestion 2) | Remarks |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Category I. The FAD is made of 100% biodegradable materials. | Year X + 3 | Year X + d | Year X will be determined by the WCPFC and subject to review based on available information and availability of materials |
| Category II. The FAD is made of 100% biodegradable materials except for plastic-based flotation components (e.g., plastic buoys, foam, purse-seine corks). | Year X + 2 | Year X + c | Year X will be determined by the WCPFC and subject to review based on available information and availability of materials |
| Category III(a). The subsurface part of the FAD is made of 100% biodegradable materials, whereas the surface part and any flotation components contain non-biodegradable materials (e.g., synthetic raffia, metallic frame, plastic floats, nylon ropes). | Year X | Year X + b | Year X will be determined by the WCPFC and subject to review based on available information and availability of materials |
| Category III(b). The subsurface part of the FAD contains non-biodegradable materials, whereas the surface part is made of 100% biodegradable materials, except for, possibly, flotation components. | Year X | Year X + a | Year X will be determined by the WCPFC and subject to review based on available information and availability of materials |
| Category IV. The surface and subsurface parts of the FAD contain non-biodegradable materials. | Current | Year X | |

Note These definitions do not apply to electronic buoys attached to FADs to track them.*

⁵ The Categories were renumbered as follows: Category III = Category III(a); Category IV = Category III(b) and Category V = Category IV

FADMO-IWG Agenda 2024 – 2026

| Agenda | Timeline ¹ | | | Remarks |
|--|-----------------------|------|------|---|
| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | |
| I. Satellite Buoy Data Transmission Requirements Consider requirements for the transmission of satellite buoy data from drifting FADs in 2024 to promote effective and sustainable FAD management in the WCPFC (<i>paragraph 56, WCPFC20 Outcomes Document</i>) - <i>Process, protocols, data fields, etc</i> | | | | Prepare document for consideration of SC, TCC, and Commission |
| II. FAD Recovery Programs/Strategies Consider ways to implement FAD recovery programs/strategies, including economic aspects and standards required for programs to be effective (<i>paragraph 52, WCPFC20 Outcomes Document</i>) - <i>Process, protocols, guide, best practices, etc</i> | | | | Prepare document for consideration of SC, TCC, and Commission |
| III. FAD logbook Consider relevant information/materials to develop the WCPFC FAD logbook for vessel operators (<i>paragraph 53c, WCPFC20 Outcomes Document</i>) - <i>Data fields, procedures, etc</i> | | | | Prepare document for consideration of SC, TCC, and Commission |
| IV. Biodegradable FADs Consider ways for the implementation of the stepwise introduction of biodegradable dFADs (<i>paragraph 53a, WCPFC20 Outcomes Document</i>) - <i>Timeline, guidelines, etc</i> | | | | Prepare document for consideration of SC, TCC, and Commission |
| V. DFAD Deployment Provide advice to WCPFC23 on the effectiveness of the limit on the number of dFADs deployed as set in paragraph [21] of the CMM 2023-01 (<i>paragraph 53b, WCPFC20 Outcomes Document</i>) | | | | Prepare document for consideration of SC, TCC, and Commission |

Notes: The FADMO-IWG agenda will be discussed by email communications, online meetings and/or physical meetings (preferably back-to-back with TCC, in 2025 at the latest).

¹ Will be updated annually.

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