



COMMISSION
Twenty-First Regular Session
28 November to 3 December 2024
Suva, Fiji (Hybrid)

Intersessional process to develop voluntary regional guides for the use of tools in conducting high seas boarding and inspections

Voluntary regional guides for the use of tools in conducting high seas boarding and inspections

Background

1. Recalling:
 - *CMM 2006-08 11. The Commission shall keep the implementation of these procedures under review.*
 - *CMM 2006-08 47b. In applying these procedures, Contracting Parties may seek to promote optimum use of the authorized inspection vessels and authorized inspectors by: ensuring that boarding and inspection on the high seas is fully integrated with the other monitoring, compliance and surveillance tools available pursuant to the Convention.*
 - *TCC20 requested Australia along with interested CCMs to bring a paper to WCPFC21 on an intersessional process to develop voluntary regional guides and best practices for the use of tools in conducting high seas boarding and inspections including, but not limited to, DNA testing, weight estimation, assessment of bycatch mitigation methods, collection and dissemination of photo and video evidence, and to update the Standardized Multi-language Questionnaire and report to TCC21 for discussion and possible adoption at WCPFC22.*
2. This paper outlines the WCPFC21 endorsed intersessional process to address TCC20's request of Australia and interested CCMs. Interested CCMs and observers to provide existing guides and documentation for relevant High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI) tools and nominate technical experts to participate in the process

Objectives for the intersessional work

3. This process seeks to establish a group of technical experts to draft guides on HSBI evidence collection for consideration at TCC21.
4. Accounting for items discussed during TCC20, it is proposed the intersessional process will consider guides for the following indicative list of HSBI tools:
 - *DNA testing (including benefits, recommended procedures for sampling and processing to an evidentiary standard),*
 - *weight estimation,*
 - *calibration certificates for measuring tools*
 - *measurement of tori lines,*
 - *measurement of weighted branch lines,*
 - *collection of photographs and video evidence (including file type recommendations, and capturing actions of inspectors such as measurements and DNA sampling),*
 - *recommendations for dissemination of photographic and video evidence consisting of many, or large files that cannot be sent via email, and*
 - *update the Standardized Multi-language Questionnaire.*
5. The above tools were chosen as a starting point, and it is recognized that there are other existing or emerging HSBI tools which may require additional guides to be developed.

Informal Intersessional Process

6. Australia will lead the intersessional work, supported by China and other interested CCMs to develop the HSBI guides.
7. A group of technical experts will be established at WCPFC21 to support the drafting of Draft HSBI Guides during 2025.
8. The WCPFC Secretariat will provide support for this process, including circulating meeting notices and making relevant documents available on the WCPFC website.
9. The intersessional process shall be open to all CCMs and observers.
10. All CCMs and observers are encouraged to provide input to the work of the working group.
11. Any CCMs with such guides or proposed specifications are requested to share them with Australia and interested CCMs for consideration.
12. The lead/co-leads are responsible for producing the first draft of the HSBI Guides and preparing drafts for TCC21 and WCPFC22.
13. The process will be convened electronically, with the potential to convene in the margins of other in-person meetings.

Voluntary HSBI Guides – Proposed drafting considerations and terms of reference

14. The HSBI Guides will accommodate, to the extent possible, any existing HSBI guidance shared by CCMs that have established HSBI procedures.

15. The application of the HSBI Guides will be voluntary and apply to HSBI activities within the WCPFC area of competence.
16. The HSBI Guides will set out voluntary procedures for HSBI Inspectors to follow and will include, *but are not limited to*, data collection and sampling protocols.
17. The development of HSBI Guides will complement the existing HSBI CMM 2008-06 and other related CMMs that impose obligations relevant to HSBI activities (e.g. bycatch mitigation measures). However, under no circumstances shall the development of these guides contravene the provisions of CMM 2006-08 and related CMMs, nor shall it produce a discriminatory effect on members conducting HSBI

Schedule of Work

18. CCMs interested in actively participating in the development of the HSBI Guides should notify their intent as soon as possible to Australia and the WCPFC Secretariat and provide contact details to:
 - David Power <david.power@afma.gov.au>, Senior Manager, Foreign Compliance Policy, Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA)
 - cc. Lara Manarangi-Trott <lara.manarangi-trott@wcpfc.int>, Compliance Manager, WCPFC
 - cc. Emily Lawson <emily.lawson@afma.gov.au>, Senior Policy Officer, Foreign Compliance Policy, AFMA.
19. Preparation of the first draft HSBI guide will commence in January 2025 with initial drafts to be circulated to working group participants.
20. Technical experts in the working group shall hold (at least) two informal intersessional virtual meetings/workshops to gather and review the draft HSBI guides. The virtual meetings will be hosted by Australia with the support of the WCPFC Secretariat. It is anticipated the first meeting will be held in the first quarter of 2025 with second meeting in the second quarter of 2025.
21. Draft HSBI Guides will be presented to TCC21 for consideration prior proposed adoption at WCPFC22.