

Cooperation with Other Organizations

Paper submitted by the Secretariat

Abstract

This Information Paper reports the Commission's efforts and progress in liaising with other relevant international organizations during 2024/2025.

Introduction

With reference to Article 21 of the Convention, cooperation with relevant international organizations such as RFMOs, scientific bodies, and other agencies, is one of the important steps that the Commission should take to meet the objectives of the Convention. NPFC has maintained formal relations with other international organizations since the establishment of the Commission. These are outlined on our website (<https://www.npfc.int/Cooperation-with-other-Organizations>). During 2024/2025, the Commission has made progress in cooperating with a number of international organizations including those with overlapping geographical areas with the NPFC Convention Area. The purpose of this working paper is to report to Members on the intersessional activities of the Commission in liaising with other relevant organizations and seek guidance from the Commission to enhance cooperation with them.

Status of Relations

NPAFC

NPFC has continued to cooperate with NPAFC in diverse areas of interest to both organizations. The Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) signed in May 2019 between the NPFC and the NPAFC has facilitated cooperation between the two RFMOs with a focus on the following areas:

- salmon bycatch or retention information
- 5-year Work plan to implement NPAFC/NPFC MOC, 2021–2025
- NPAFC's multinational pan-Pacific survey in 2022

As the follow-up of the MOC, NPFC and NPAFC developed a 5-year Work Plan to implement the MOC (<https://www.npfc.int/memorandum-cooperation-between-npfc-and-npafc>). The NPAFC requested the NPFC to share salmon bycatch or retention information, and Members considered the request at the TCC04 meeting and determined that Members may consider, on a voluntary basis, to report significant encounters of salmon during high seas boarding and inspection to the SWG OPs.

NPFC financially supported NPAFC's multinational pan-Pacific survey to estimate abundance, distribution, migration, growth, fitness, and survival of Pacific salmon and ecologically related species in the North Pacific Ocean which was conducted in February-April 2022. The report from the NPAFC is available ([NPFC-2022-SC07-OP01](#)).

NPFC and NPAFC Secretariats meet virtually to discuss possibility of co-hosting a workshop on transshipment that was identified by NPAFC in 2023. However, with the 2023 adoption of NPFC's transshipment measure, it was initially determined that such a workshop would benefit from a year or two of data collected from the transshipment activity. The NPAFC has proposed a detailed plan for a future workshop that will be discussed at TCC08 (NPFC-2025-TCC08-WP17).

PICES

The first 5-year Framework for Enhanced Scientific Collaboration in the North Pacific between NPFC and PICES was adopted in 2019 and was in effect until the end of 2024. Members of NPFC and PICES worked over summer 2024 to assess the progress on the priority areas, and to discuss new areas for collaborations. The 2019 Framework identified three major areas of mutual interest that were to be a focus during the first 5 years, to 2024: (i) support for stock assessment for priority species (ii) vulnerable marine ecosystems and (iii) ecosystem approach to fisheries. The revised Framework, which is proposed for 2024-2029, maintains these three areas as still of priority for joint activities, but also noted that climate change impacts will be considered across all priority areas and incorporated where relevant. Examples of impacts include: distributional changes of fish stocks, the impact of ocean acidification and factors affecting species life history parameters and productivity. Data sharing and data management were also seen as something to be encouraged. The revised Framework was presented to PICES Governing Council at PICES-2024 where it was endorsed. It was reviewed and endorsed by SC in December 2024 and will be presented to COM09 for consideration.

Based on the Framework for Enhanced Scientific Collaboration in the North Pacific between NPFC and PICES, the organizations held the following collaborative activities:

- NPFC representatives (Dr. Kitakado and Dr. Oshima) took part in the PICES-ICES joint Working Group on *Sustainable Pelagic Forage Communities* (WGSPF) established in 2024 to contribute to the implementation of the workplan and discuss the scope, potential scientific program and logistics for the next SPF 2026 symposium.
- The PICES-2024 annual meeting took place in Honolulu in October 2024. SM took part in this meeting, including participating as a panelist in the PICES workshop on Exploring international knowledge co-production and the science-policy interface, and representing NPFC at business meetings of the Science Board and Fishery Science Committee.
- NPFC expressed its support for the development and implementation of the BECI project in line with the NPFC-PICES Framework for Enhanced Scientific Collaboration. The

PICES BECI Science Director attended SC09 (Tokyo) to present the work and identify opportunities to partner with them.

Representation at Annual Meetings

- Representatives of the NPFC (SC Chair, Dr. Curtis and Science Manager, Dr. Zavolokin) participated in PICES-2024 attending the Plenary Session, topic sessions and business meetings of the Science Board, Biological Oceanography Committee (BIO), Fishery Science Committee (FIS) and some business meetings of PICES working groups (such as WGs 43 and 47). Written reports were also provided to PICES Governing Council.
- The Executive Secretary of PICES attended virtually the NPFC's Scientific Committee meeting in December 2024, also giving a presentation on joint activities between the organizations as well as in-person attendance by the Basin-scale Events and Coastal Impacts Science Director who presented updates on the developing science plan and opportunities for NPFC.

Upcoming opportunities

- The next PICES annual meeting, PICES-2025, will be held in Yokohama, Japan on 7 to 16 November 2025. An NPFC representative will attend the meeting to facilitate the implementation of the Framework for Enhanced Scientific Collaboration in the North Pacific between NPFC and PICES and participate in scientific sessions and business meetings of working groups, committees and science board.
- The NPFC was invited to co-sponsor the SPF-2026 symposium in La Paz, Mexico on May 4-8, 2026.

FAO-ABNJ Deep Seas Project

NPFC has been cooperating with FAO and its ABNJ project since the beginning of the Commission and has contributed to this project as one of the project partners. FAO informed project partners that the second phase of the project was approved on 2 June 2020, with USD 5 million for 5 years for the Deep Sea Fisheries (DSF) project and looked forward to the participation of deep-sea RFMOs including NPFC in the second phase of the DSF project which commenced in mid-2022. NPFC, as one of the 7 deep-sea RFMOs, has provided a co-financing (in-kind contribution) partnership letter to join the project as a project partner.

The objective of the DSF project is to ensure that DSF in the ABNJ are managed under an ecosystem approach that maintains demersal fish stocks at levels capable of maximizing their sustainable yields and minimizing impacts on biodiversity, with a focus on data-limited stocks, deepwater sharks and vulnerable marine ecosystems.

The project's Theory of Change summarizes the activities, outputs and outcomes that underpin the

project. The successful achievement of the project's objective will require input and support from project partners, in particular the participating RFMOs and industry. The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) will take the lead role in supporting the project in the work on data-limited stocks.

FAO presented an update on the key activities and next steps of the ABNJ DSF Project at the SC09 meeting. The DSF Project offered financial support to NPFC and hired an expert to review modalities for incorporating climate change effects into the work of deep-sea RFMOs, including the NPFC. A report on climate change effects on the NPFC stocks was presented to SC09 and is available on the NPFC website. The DSF Project would also like to partner with the ICES to assess data-limited stocks, such as SA and NPA, and monitor rapid change and would like suggestions from NPFC of stock experts that would like to join this initiative. The DSF Project will hold a symposium in March 2025 on the "Application of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (AEFM) in ABNJ – recent development in the monitoring, assessment and mitigation of ecosystem impacts of fisheries." The DSF Project is also reviewing the implementation of the FAO DSF Guidelines and will develop and publish the final draft in the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper series in early 2024.

The SC identified the following points of contact for the DSF Project:

- Climate change work: Dr. Erin Bohaboy (USA)
- Data-limited stock assessment of SA and NPA: Dr. Takehiro Okuda (Japan)
- EAFM framework and symposium: Alex Zavolokin (Science Manager)

The DSF project has developed a draft shark ID key to support the implementation of CMM 2023-14 on Sharks. It will continue to work on the ID key and present it at the next SC meeting.

FAO Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS)

NPFC and FIRMS signed a Partnership Arrangement in 2023. FIRMS aims to facilitate access to a wide range of high-quality web-based information on the status and trends of global marine fishery resources, fisheries and their management. The overall goal of the FIRMS partnership is to provide decision-makers with necessary information to develop effective fisheries policies in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. It was noted that FIRMS does not request any confidential data and works with publicly available information only.

Science Manager, in cooperation with Secretariat team, provided the necessary information for the FIRMS databases on stocks and fisheries and will update it annually.

WCPFC and ISC

NPFC and WCPFC have been in discussions for several years to develop a Memorandum of Understanding on areas of mutual interest. Given the partial overlap of convention areas, there is

interest in enhanced information-sharing about activities such as transshipment in areas of WCPFC jurisdiction that overlap with the NPFC Convention Area. Collaboration on scientific activities in common waters is another area of focus that aligns with NPFC's ecosystem approach.

With the approval of COM08 on the text of the two MOU, these were signed by the Commission Chair (Mr. Shingo OTA) and the Chairs of ISC (Mr. John Holmes) and WCPFC (Dr. Josie Tamate) and can be found on the NPFC website (<https://www.npfc.int/Cooperation-with-other-Organizations>).

SPRFMO

While SPRFMO does not have areas of jurisdictional overlap with NPFC, both RFMO's manage similar fisheries and there are many vessels on the Vessel Registry of both Commissions. A request to develop a formal MOU between NPFC and SPRFMO was received in 2019 and based on COM07 decision to submit a revised MOU to SPRFMO, and SPRFMO acceptance of that text, the MOU was signed by the Executive Secretaries of the two organizations and is now being implemented. As you will see in the Secretariat Report (NPFC-2025-SR), the NPFC Science Manager attended the 2024 SPRFMO Science Committee meeting . As a similarly aged RFMO with similar fisheries, regular discussions occur between the Secretariats and are facilitated by this confirmed approach.

OTHERS

International Monitoring, Compliance and Surveillance Network (IMCS) - COM07 accepted the invitation from the IMCS Network – The International Monitoring Control and Surveillance Network (an official observer to NPFC) to join its network in 2023, and the Secretariat has subsequently received considerable support from the Network, particularly in its efforts to assess updated information received from Members about vessels on the NPFC IUU Vessels List.

IMCS-Pan Pacific Fisheries Compliance Manager Network (PPFCN) - The Compliance Manager participates in an IMCS-led informal group, the PPFCN comprised of the compliance managers of the RFMOs in the Pacific Ocean Basin to exchange information on compliance practices and mechanisms for more effective information sharing.