



North Pacific Fisheries Commission

Regulations for Management of Scientific Data and Information

(revised in December 2024)

These Regulations are intended to govern the security of, exchange of, access to and dissemination of scientific data and computer code (referred to as code hereafter) held by, or accessed by Members of the Commission, its subsidiary bodies, the Secretariat, and by service providers, contractors, or consultants acting on their behalf or others so authorized for access by the Secretariat. These Regulations supplement the NPFC Data Sharing and Data Security Protocol which is an overall Commission policy for data management and security.

I. Guidance for Management of Scientific Data and Code

1. Objectives

The objectives of this Guidance are (1) to support stock assessments, ecosystem assessments and accumulation of scientific knowledge of fisheries resources under the Commission's jurisdiction, (2) to encourage cooperation on scientific analyses among Members, and (3) to establish a process for handling scientific data and code.

2. Scientific Data included in Members' Annual Reports

Scientific data (e.g., catch amount, number of vessels, number of fishing days and so on) included in Members' Annual Reports should be uploaded to the public section of the NPFC website for public access and use. In order not to reveal the individual activities of any vessel, catch and effort data in the public domain shall be made up of observations from a minimum of three vessels, unless the owner of the data decides otherwise.

3. Other scientific data and code, not included in Members' Annual Reports, submitted for use in stock assessments and ecosystem assessments

The Secretariat should not disclose Members' scientific data or code submitted by means other than Members' Annual Reports or meeting documents open to the public in accordance with paragraph 4.

Members, cooperating non-contracting Parties (CNCs) or contractors (invited experts and/or consultants), within the scope of its contract with the Secretariat, may cite and/or use such data and/or code for the purpose of consideration by the Scientific Committee and its subsidiary bodies, including informal working groups, in accordance with the relevant rules including the Terms of References of informal working groups. Before a Member, CNC or contractor accesses data and/or code for analyses outside the activities outlined in the workplans of SC subsidiary bodies, the party should obtain prior consent with the provider(s) for the use of the data or code through the Secretariat, stating 1) the data or code subject to the request, and 2) the purpose for which the data or code is intended to be used.

If a Member, CNCP or contractor, within the scope of its contract with the Secretariat, wishes to cite and/or use these data and/or code for work that is intended to be conducted or shared outside of the NPFC, such Member, CNCP or contractor should consult with the provider(s) of the data or code through the Secretariat, stating 1) the data or code subject to the request, and 2) the purpose for which the data or code is intended to be used and 3) who the data or code will be shared with. The Secretariat should immediately notify the provider(s) of the request. The provider(s) should inform the Secretariat within 30 calendar days whether to accept or reject the request. If the provider(s) reject the request, the provider(s) should state the reason(s) for the rejection. If the provider(s) accept the request, the provider(s) may request an agreed-upon credit line in any subsequently-created product. Those who cited/used data or code should not distribute the data and/or code further nor use it for a purpose not declared.

In addition to the above paragraph, if a Member, CNCP or contractor after presentation and review at NPFC Scientific meetings, wishes to publish a scientific article in an external journal using the requested data and/or code, such Member, CNCP or contractor should ensure that all data/code providers have reviewed the results and approved using them in the external publication.

II. Regulations for management of scientific meeting documents, meeting reports and intersessional communications on the NPFC website

4. Working Papers, Meeting Info Papers, Information Papers, Reference Documents/Papers, Observer Papers

In accordance with the NPFC Document Policy from COM09, the SC recommends making the above named documents available to the public through the NPFC website to enhance and encourage collaborations with researchers, scientists, RFMOs, and science organizations, and to encourage transparency of the NPFC processes. The default rule would be that all the above named documents would be posted on the public domain of the NPFC website upon receipt. All meeting papers submitted to any NPFC scientific meetings through the Secretariat should indicate how they should be cited in accordance with the NPFC Document Rules. If the document author(s) or submitting Member do not authorize the release of the document, they must indicate that clearly on the cover page or first page of the document, OR they may request to the Secretariat in writing of their desire to not release the document to the public on the website.

5. SC Meeting Reports, SC Subsidiary Body Reports (SSC, TWG) and Other Scientific Reports (Workshop)

5.1. The SC recommends that the above named documents be released to the public after acceptance by the Commission Members within 45 days in accordance with the procedures stated in Paragraph 8.2 of Rules of Procedure.

5.2. For SC subsidiary body reports: If there are portions of the report which are deemed by the subsidiary body to be too sensitive to release prior to the SC report, the specific sensitive portions may be redacted, and the report released as described in #5.1 above. Following the SC meeting, the entire report (inclusive of redacted portions) will be released in conjunction with the SC report.

If the report as a whole is deemed too sensitive to release, the report may be held and released to the public in conjunction with the SC Meeting Report. Decisions about which portion or whether the whole report is to be redacted shall be made during the subsidiary body meeting.

6. Intersessional Communication using the NPFC Collaboration website

The NPFC has made available a web-based tool to facilitate discussion of its subsidiary bodies, informal working groups, discussion groups, and other temporary groups on a project-by-project basis. Access to this tool is restricted to members of a specific project/topic. Following the completion of the discussion, the group facilitator/chair may summarize the discussions to make them available and accessible to the appropriate Commission body (TCC, SC, SWG MSE PS, Commission). At the conclusion of the discussions of the group and after the summary is complete, the discussion text and documents will be archived by the Secretariat but not maintained on the website except for a summary made by the group facilitator/chair.

7. Redaction or withdrawal of Working Papers, Meeting Info Papers, Information Papers, Reference Documents/Papers, Observer Papers which were submitted to workshop or meeting

Documents of the types listed above may not be redacted or withdrawn from the public or Member-only area of the website by a Member or the Secretariat once it has been published unless notification is provided to all Members which details the reason for the withdrawal request. If an error is identified in a publicly available document, the member responsible for the document submission can submit a cover letter or document text which describes the error and the resolution to be prepended to the original document. Errors identified in documents prior to publication on the public website or during meetings or workshops can be revised or documents withdrawn before or during the meeting, but other members or meeting participants must be notified of the specifics of the changes as soon as possible.