

NPFC/FAO workshop: Science-based management options available for operationalizing the precautionary approach as outlined in the Convention for NPFC priority species

Wednesday 10 December 2025

14:00-18:00 Japan Standard Time

Background

The international fisheries policy and legal framework, including the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) and the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), clearly calls for the application of a precautionary approach (PA) to all fisheries, recognizing that most problems affecting fisheries result from insufficiency of precaution in management regimes when faced with the high levels of uncertainty encountered in fisheries. The framework calls for, *inter alia*:

- protecting living marine resources and preserving the marine environment;
- being cautious when information is uncertain, unreliable or inadequate;
- a range of measures related to the precautionary management of target stocks, including the adoption of target and limit reference points and clearly identified actions to be taken if these are exceeded, as well as the development and application of long-term management plans based on the best scientific advice available;
- taking into account the impact of fishing activities on non-target and associated or dependent species, as well as existing and predicted oceanic, environmental and socio-economic impacts;
- developing data collection, research and monitoring programmes.

Most regional fisheries management organizations, including the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC), have adopted Conventions that make the application of the PA obligatory to Contracting Parties. Different RFMOs have taken different approaches to translate this commitment into action, including through the development and adoption of PA frameworks, stock-specific short- and long-term management plans, and stock-specific management strategy evaluations and harvest strategies.

The NPFC Scientific Committee (SC) has called for an informal workshop to explore “science-based management options available for operationalizing the precautionary approach as outlined in the Convention for NPFC priority species”. At the 9th meeting of the Commission (COM09), the NPFC’s Scientific Committee Chair invited the Common Oceans Deep-sea Fisheries (DSF) Project, implemented by FAO, to support the SC with the convening of this workshop.

This workshop will provide SC meeting participants with opportunities to further consider the Commission’s task of recommending science-based management options for operationalizing the PA for NPFC priority species. This task will be discussed during SC10 from 16-19 December 2025 and is based on the Performance Review Panel’s Recommendation 4.1.2.

While the workshop is organized under the auspices of the SC, managers are invited and encouraged to attend, and to actively take part in the discussions.

Format

The workshop will be held in a hybrid format to permit both in-person and virtual attendance.

Venue

Nagoya Port Building, 2F, Meeting Room C.

Registration

The workshop is open to all NPFC Members, CNCP, observers and Secretariat guests. Please register through the NPFC website <https://www.npfc.int/>

Coffee/Tea Breaks

Workshop participants will be offered coffee/tea and snacks.

Draft Agenda

Time	Item	Speaker/Facilitator
14:00-14:10	Opening of the workshop, introduction and overview of key objectives	Janelle Curtis , NPFC SC Chair
14:10-14:25	Overview of international requirements for the application of the PA – managers' responsibilities	Sarah Fagnani , Policy and Legal Expert, FAO
14:25-14:50	Application of the PA to target and bycatch species	Rishi Sharma , Senior Fishery Officer, FAO
14:50-15:15	Application of the PA to reduce ecosystem impacts and linkages to the implementation of EAFM	Anthony Thompson , DSF Expert, FAO
15:15-15:45	Facilitated discussion	Jie Cao , NPFC SC Vice-Chair, Erin Bohaboy , NPFC SC member, USA and Rishi Sharma , Senior Fishery Officer, FAO
15:45-16:00	Coffee break	
16:00-16:10	Examples from the field - the NAFO PA framework	Fernando Gonzalez Costas , NAFO SC member, Spanish Institute of Oceanography
16:10-16:20	Examples from the field - GFCM long-term management plans for shrimp	Elisabetta Morello , Senior Fishery Officer, General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
16:20-16:30	Examples from the field - Management strategy evaluations and harvest strategies	Shana Miller , The Ocean Foundation
16:30-17:00	Pacific saury stock assessment and management	Toshihide Kitakado , NPFC SSC PS Chair
17:00-17:50	Facilitated discussion and conclusions	Jie Cao , NPFC SC Vice-Chair, Erin Bohaboy , NPFC SC member, USA and Rishi Sharma , Senior Fishery Officer, FAO
17:50-18:00	Closing remarks	Janelle Curtis , NPFC SC Chair

Guiding questions

A list of guiding questions has been developed to facilitate discussions in the last hour of the workshop:

1. How is NPFC currently already applying the PA and where are the gaps?
2. What should be the priority stocks, non-target species and habitats?
3. Would long-term management plans and impact assessments help?
4. What are the responsibilities of the SC and Commission for implementing the PA?
5. Could the establishment of a joint SC-Commission Working Group on PA help to bring this work forward?