

CHINA PROPOSAL FOR A RESOLUTION ON THE BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE

Libin Dai, Qiuyun Ma, Siquan Tian
Shanghai Ocean University

Explanatory note

Sound scientific advice is essential for the conservation and management of fisheries resources in the North Pacific Ocean and is fundamental to achieving the objectives of the NPFC Convention, including the long-term sustainability of fisheries resources and the protection of the marine ecosystem. To ensure that the Commission can effectively fulfill these objectives, it is necessary that scientific advice provided to the Commission is based on the best available science.

This proposed resolution identifies actions to support the independence, quality, and effectiveness of NPFC scientific work by securing objective and transparent scientific input, improving the clarity and accessibility of scientific advice provided to managers, and strengthening peer review mechanisms. Enhanced collection and timely submission of data, and continued development of scientific research and capacity building are also essential to strengthening the scientific foundation of the Commission's work.

Active participation of scientists from all Members in the work of the Scientific Committee will help ensure the availability of reliable data, including on target species, bycatch, and ecosystem components, for scientific assessments. Such participation will contribute to the regular review and improvement of the Commission's scientific processes.

In this context, a clear framework emphasizing the use of the best available science within the NPFC is needed to reinforce scientific integrity, enhance transparency, and support informed and precautionary decision-making by the Commission.

RESOLUTION ON THE BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE

The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC),

Recognizing the importance of sound scientific advice as the centerpiece for the conservation and management of fisheries resources in the Convention Area, in accordance with international law and in line with the information needs of the NPFC;

Aware that the availability of adequate scientific information is fundamental to carrying out the objectives of the Convention laid down in its Article 2;

Emphasizing the importance of the effective participation of Commission Members and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CNCs) in the work of Scientific Committee (SC) and its subsidiary bodies;

Noting that external expert participation may advance the quality assurance of the scientific work of the SC and its subsidiary bodies;

Further recognizing the essential role of transparent, objective, and independent scientific processes in supporting the Commission's decisions;

Acknowledging the high-priority recommendations of the 2022 independent Review Panel regarding the development of guidelines to ensure that scientific advice provided to the Commission reflects standards of best available science;

Agrees to:

1. Take all measures which would be appropriate
 - a) To improve the communication between Members and CNCs, the SC, the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC), and Commission in relation to the provision of scientific advice by enabling a constant and regular dialogue;
 - b) To improve the collection and submission of data to the SC and its subsidiary bodies, including on bycatches;
 - c) To support research programs and projects supporting the work of the SC and its subsidiary bodies;
 - d) To facilitate participation in meetings of the SC, as well as in other relevant scientific bodies, of scientists with suitable scientific qualifications from all Members;

- e) To contribute to the training of scientific researchers, including young scientists.
2. Preserve and promote the independence and excellence of the SC and its subsidiary bodies by:
 - a) Enhancing the participation of scientists to meetings of the SC and its subsidiary bodies, including scientists involved in other regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) and other relevant scientific bodies;
 - b) Ensuring that relevant, professionally independent and objective scientific advice, based on the best available and peer-reviewed scientific analysis, is presented by the SC to the Commission;
 - c) Ensuring that sources and history of revisions of all documents submitted to and assessed by the SC and its subsidiary bodies are fully documented;
 - d) Providing clear, transparent, and standardized formats for the provision of advice to the Commission;
 - e) Providing for well-defined rules for formulating scientific advice to the Commission, reflecting different views while striving for consensus, to promote consistency and transparency;
 3. Develop and strengthen peer review mechanisms within the SC by participation of invited experts (e.g. from other RFMOs or from academia), particularly for stock assessments. These outside experts shall be subject to the data confidentiality rules and procedures currently applicable in the NPFC.
 4. Encourage and support initiatives by the SC to publish its scientific findings in peer-reviewed scientific journals.
 5. With the aim of meeting the above-mentioned objectives, consider broadening financial support and mechanisms, including *inter alia*, contributing to the “Voluntary Contributions Fund”, for the purpose of the implementation of this Resolution, in particular to:
 - a) Contribute to the scientific capacity building of early-career scientists from all Members and enhance their effective participation in the work of the SC;
 - b) Provide necessary resources for the SC and its subsidiary bodies.