



North Pacific Fisheries Commission

NPFC-2026-FAC08-IP03

Submitted by the Secretariat

### **Implementation of Staff Regulations – Internal Policies**

**Abstract:** This paper provides a copy of the social security policy, as well as other elements, that implement the staff regulations. This was discussed at FAC07:

Extract from FAC07 Report:

*33. The FAC discussed and endorsed the proposal to update Staff Regulation 8.1 to better reflect current practices and improve benefits coverage, including the addition of workers' accident insurance for international staff.*

**Recommendation:** *That the Commission adopt the proposed revisions to Staff Regulation 8.1, with the removal of the phrase “as outlined in NPFC Policy” for clarity and to implement the Secretariat’s approach to provide staff with social security benefits beginning in the 2025/2026 fiscal year.*

**Recommendation:** *That the Commission direct the Secretariat to develop an applicable NPFC Social Security Policy for consideration of FAC08.*

**Considerations:** The updates made to the staff regulations have been incorporated into the practice of the Secretariat, in line with the attached policy. The Executive Secretary and spouse are enrolled in the public health insurance, and the new Compliance Manager will also be enrolled, as outlined in the policy. All staff are now enrolled in the accident insurance. Pension payments are included with staff pay and some funds that had been previously held in reserve, have been disbursed in line with the policy (determined by the COM09 decision).

A concern related to this policy is identified in FAC08-WP08. Members are asked to consider retroactively applying the pension calculation for residents of Japan where a different approach was used for international staff versus residents of Japan as of September 2021.

In addition the policy for working hours is provided for your information. It codifies the remote work policy that is currently in place for staff living and working in Japan as well as one element for Home leave.

Members are asked to provide comments on the implementation of the relevant Staff Regulations.

## **NPFC Social Security Policy**

### **Implementation of Regulation 8.1**

In 2023, the Secretariat sought a review by Japanese HR company (Olivia and Associates) of its social security system. A consideration that was proposed by them was to consider having all staff fully adopt the Japanese social security scheme. Further analysis of this with a bilingual Japanese-English Labor and Social Security Attorney (*Sharoushi*) in 2024 noted that many elements are not available to non-residents (e.g., employment insurance) or challenging to navigate on removal (e.g. disadvantage to join the Japanese public pension for the international staff on contract). The latter situation is the same found for SPRFMO where a similarly structured pension scheme is in place for international staff.

As such the focus of implementing Regulation 8 in 2025/2026 is on identifying options to ensure staff are adequately insured and aligning the staff regulations where issues were identified in the 2023 review.

The goal is to ensure access to quality health care and access to applicable insurances. Some aspects are still being explored due to the challenges of the status of “Official” for international staff.

#### **Status to 31 March 2025**

##### **Residents of Japan:**

Residents of Japan (Japanese nationals and foreign residents) take advantage of the integrated Japanese public social security system (Annex 1). This is to ensure the residents’ minimum standard of living and is comprised of health insurance that includes dental and eyecare, public pension, workers accident and disability insurance and unemployment insurance. Life insurance is not currently provided.

##### **Non-Residents of Japan (i.e., those working with the status of “Official”):**

The situation is more complicated and some of the insurances listed in the staff regulation (until their update in 2025 at COM09) were not provided historically. The approach until 2025 was to require international staff to acquire individual private medical insurance “to the satisfaction of the Executive Secretary”.

## **Implementation of NPFC Staff Regulation 8.1 (as amended at COM09)**

### REGULATION 8 SOCIAL SECURITY

*8.1 It is a condition of employment that each staff member will contribute equitably to a recognized retirement fund (including the Japanese national scheme, other central government scheme, the NPFC pension scheme) and have adequate medical, hospital, and workers accident insurance cover to the satisfaction of the Executive Secretary. Such insurance cover shall include adequate provision for dependents. The Commission shall pay two-thirds of the total contribution to the retirement fund and of the health and medical insurance premiums, up to the maximum percentage applying in the United Nations Secretariat from time to time of the total of the staff member's salary. Such payment shall be by way of reimbursement upon the production of receipts or shall be paid direct together with the employee's contribution. A staff member may take out additional insurance coverage at their own cost.*

#### **1. Retirement Fund:**

The NPFC will make contributions of up to 15.8% of staff salary (2/3), to be matched by staff member contribution (7.9% or 1/3) to be placed in a registered retirement fund if practicable (NPFC-2021-Final Report, Annex H, p. 267) (23.3% in total). To date no straightforward mechanism has been found in the Japanese private sector such as banks that allows for the deposit and withdrawal (on retirement) of the retirement funds for non-residents of Japan.

For international staff, from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2025, NPFC paid the employer contribution into a reserve pension fund based on the COM decision reflected above. This was paid out in a lump sum on departure (i.e., previous Executive Secretary 31 December 2021 and Compliance Manager 31 September 2022).

This poses challenges if staff are retained for a period of time as they are not able to seek any investment opportunity to address inflation losses. Other RFMO facing the same situation (i.e., SPRFMO) make this payment on a monthly basis to the individual.

To address this historical issue existing staff are able to access the funds held in reserve.

**Existing International Staff:** Existing staff members can elect to receive the Commission payment at the time of salary payment or defer it to the time of departure.

**New International Staff:** New International Staff engaged after 1 April 2025 will have the employer portion paid to them monthly. Individual staff are responsible for managing for their departure/retirement.

**Residents of Japan:** For residents of Japan, a prorated amount (taking into account contributions made to the public pension plan) will be provided to match the contribution for international staff as of 1 April 2025. This will be paid into a registered Japanese plan (Chutaikyo) and matched with the 1/3 equivalent salary contribution from the staff person.

**As of 1 April 2025:** the policy is to provide an equivalent payment as a percentage of gross salary into a retirement fund. In the case of residents of Japan (i.e., non-international staff) the payment will be into the public scheme with a supplemental payment of the difference into a registered account used for pension schemes. If a non-resident of Japan (i.e., international staff) makes use of the Japanese public scheme, or some other public scheme, the approach for Japanese residents would be applied.

## **2. Medical and Health Insurance:**

This policy is not a definitive interpretation of the application of the Public Health Insurance scheme but explains the overall mechanism and approach. A bilingual labor attorney is on retainer to the Commission and available to provide advice.

For international staff, each city in Japan operates the public insurance scheme independently and as such some minor variations occur. For Minato City, (the location of the Secretariat), health / hospital insurance coverage is provided for a modest monthly payment due to our status in Japan as “Official”.

<https://www.city.minato.tokyo.jp/documents/147560/20250414141720.pdf>

The Commission will reimburse two-thirds of the total contribution for the health and medical insurance premiums, up to the maximum applying in the United Nations Secretariat.

For those existing staff using private insurance, it is recognized that they are making an individual choice to not join the public health insurance scheme and need to ensure they have adequate coverage taking into account their personal circumstances.

**Residents of Japan:** Residents of Japan take advantage of the public scheme and this policy

does not alter the ability for residents to join and benefit from the public health insurance scheme.

**Existing International Staff:** Existing staff can continue their current plans or be supported to transition to the public scheme.

**New international staff:** New international staff hired after 1 April 2025 would make use of the Japanese public scheme.

### **3. Accident Insurance**

As of 1 April 2025, International Staff will be added to the public workers accident insurance scheme (*rodo saigai hoken*). Prior to this time only staff who were residents of Japan were included in this benefit.

### **4. Travel insurance**

Commission will pay for travel insurance for staff making use of public insurance and travelling for work purposes or home leave and with the opportunity to have advice from a travel agency familiar with the latest safety information by country and region

## **Implementation of Regulation 3 Hours of Work**

### **Objectives**

This internal Policy serves two purposes, which are to (1) provide guidance on worktime of Secretariat staff and (2) maximize the effectiveness of the limited labor resources in the Secretariat while supporting balance between productivity and ability to enjoy scheduled time off.

### **Background**

Staff Regulations, Regulation 3 states that

*3.1 The normal working day shall be eight hours, Monday through Friday, for a total of forty hours per week.*

*3.2 The Executive Secretary shall establish the working hours and may, in consultation with staff members, alter them for the benefit of the Commission as circumstances may require.*

The regular work week for secretariat staff is Monday to Friday with some weekend work required for meeting preparation and participation.

Flexible work hours are offered with the requirement to complete 40 hours of work per week.

In the first five years (2015 – 2020), the Secretariat mostly worked in-person in the office in Tokyo. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the work arrangement was changed to remote with a few days per month in the office.

Since the pandemic, the Secretariat has been on a hybrid work format, with up to 2 days per week “work from home”.

### **Policy**

#### **Number of working days and working hours**

In accordance with Regulation 3 of Staff Regulations, the normal working day shall be eight hours, normally from Monday through Friday, for a total of forty hours per week. The Executive Secretary shall establish the working hours and may, in consultation with staff members, alter them for the benefit of the Commission as circumstances may require.

#### **Worktime format**

Recognizing the workload of Secretariat staff that results in voluntary work during their annual leave and on weekends (which is compensated for General Service staff but not for Professional staff), staff members are granted flexibility to work remotely up to 50% of their worktime per month (i.e. up to 10 working days), subject to the following conditions:

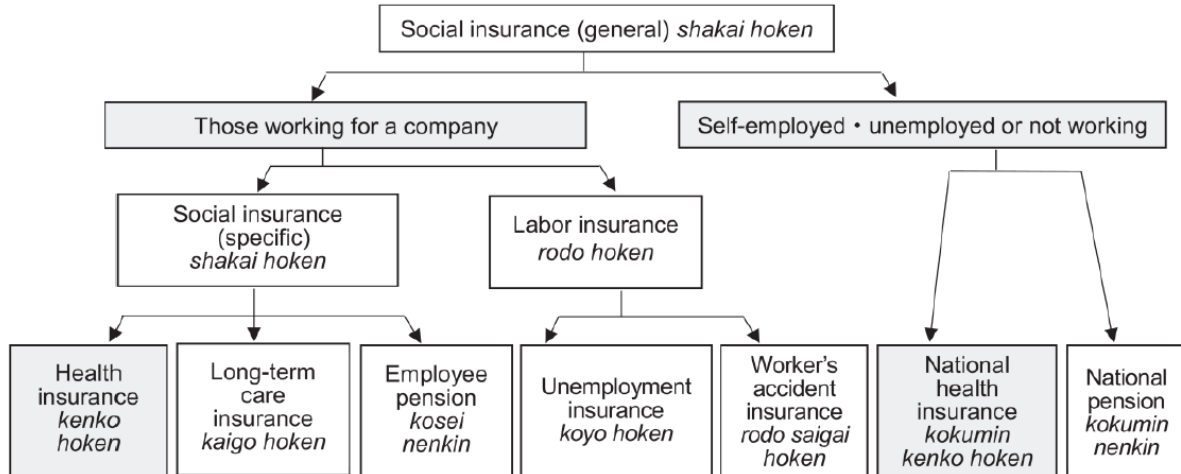
- (a) Remote work does not undermine the operation of the Secretariat.

- (b) Staff working remotely shall stay in Japan and be able to return to the Secretariat office upon a call by the Executive Secretary within 24 hours.
- (c) Staff working remotely shall be available for online meetings during regular working hours.
- (d) Amendment of a staff member's work schedule for remote work shall be discussed with and approved by the Executive Secretary in advance and consider the individuals tasks, performance review and serve for the benefit of the Commission.
- (e) Up to 10 days remote work can be applied for and used in conjunction with official "Home leave."

## Annex 1: Simplified Scheme for Japan Public Insurance System

### Japanese Public Insurance System

When you get a job and start working for a Japanese company, you will probably notice social insurance premiums being deducted from your salary. What does this “social insurance” mean? There are many types of social insurance systems in Japan, where everyone can join and be covered regardless of nationality.



◇ In this issue, we will look at the difference in **health insurance** systems between those who work for a company and those who do not.

#### ● Those working for a company and receiving a salary

Enrollment into social insurance is made through the company. Insurance premiums are deducted from your salary, where half of the expenses are paid by the company. Household dependents may also be enrolled. Insurance premiums are at no cost for household members. Enrollment into health insurance and pension are a set package.

#### ● Self-employed • unemployed or not working for a company (those other than the above)

Enrollment into national health insurance is made individually. Health insurance premiums are paid on your own to the city hall of residence. The total amount of insurance premiums including those for each family member are at the individual's expense. Similarly, enrollment into national pension is made individually.

● Payments at the hospital are only 30% of the total cost for both types. Benefits for high medical bills, child delivery, and death are also the same. Company social insurance provides benefits for partial salary guarantee for leave of absence due to illness or childbirth, while national health insurance does not.