

NPFC-2026-TCC09-WP09 Rev1

NPFC Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC)
Small Working Group (SWG) Terms of Reference
April 2026

Context:

Since TCC04, TCC has advanced intersessional priorities through two SWGs: SWG Operations and SWG Planning and Development . Draft Terms of Reference (TORs) were created, but never finalized, for these groups.

This document lays out the TOR for the SWGs, and should be read in conjunction with the [TCC Terms of Reference](#), Article 6 of the Convention, and the NPFC Rules of Transparency for TCC. Specific taskings for these two SWGs are updated annually in the TCC work plan.

Purpose:

The purpose of SWG Operations is to advise TCC and to exchange information to support the effective implementation of and compliance with existing NPFC obligations, including enforcement and monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) tools.

The purpose of SWG Planning and Development is to develop draft procedures, measures, and/or other documents identified by the Commission and tasked to TCC, and to provide advice to TCC on such drafts. SWG Planning and Development may also consider and/or propose other appropriate measures and approaches to implement Commission priorities or obligations for consideration by TCC, if Members agree.

Functions:

The overall functions of the SWGs are to support TCC in the implementation of its work plan, as determined by the Commission, by:

- a) Providing a technical forum for the exchange of information and expertise on agreed work plan objectives and related deliverables;
- b) Providing a forum for advancing TCC-related proposals and other priorities intersessionally (including, where appropriate, Member proposals for new measures or amendments to existing measures prior to submission to the TCC for consideration), and to monitor and assess progress on work plan items; and,
- c) Reporting to TCC on the status of work plan deliverables, including advising on any potential recommendations to the Commission on matters related to the scale, scope, timing and budgetary implications associated with advancing related work plan items.

Responsibilities:SWG Operations

1. Assess and provide recommendations regarding the effectiveness of MCS and/or compliance tools and measures adopted by the Commission, including but not limited to High Seas Boarding and Inspection, Vessel Monitoring System, transshipment, the Vessel Registry, and observer programs.

2. Where applicable, develop and support the development of Standard Operating Procedures for inspection reporting requirements and operational training programmes for MCS and/or compliance tools;
3. Share and coordinate information related to enforcement operations among Members, including on patrols and MCS; and,
4. Provide recommendations to TCC on the need to develop or enhance MCS and/or compliance tools, enforcement processes, and operations to support compliance consistent with the TCC work plan.

SWG Planning and Development

1. Provide recommendations to the TCC on the development or amendment of procedures, guidance, measures, and/or other tools to support effective management and MCS in the Convention Area, as well as to support the monitoring of compliance with NPFC obligations adopted by the Commission, as identified by the Commission and tasked to TCC; and,
2. Provide recommendations to TCC on the need to develop new, or enhance existing, guidelines, measures, and/or tools consistent with the TCC work plan.

Structure:

Membership in each of the SWGs shall consist of representatives of Commission Members and CNCPs. Accredited observers may also participate in SWGs consistent with Rule 9 of the Rules of Procedure and the NPFC's Rules of Transparency for TCC. Members and CNCPs may, in consultation with the Secretariat, invite participation by additional outside technical experts or consultants to participate in meetings of the SWGs if their participation would contribute to the work of the SWGs.

Representation and official contacts in each SWG shall be consistent with Rule 1 in the Commission's Rules of Procedure.

Each SWG will be managed by two Co-Leads, with the work supported and facilitated by the Compliance Manager. The Co-Leads will be responsible for developing meeting agendas, chairing meetings, and liaising with the TCC Chair where required. Co-Leads shall be nominated by the Member's Head of Delegation. The Commission shall appoint Co-Lead positions by consensus in accordance with the decision-making rules within the NPFC Rules of Procedure of the Commission, considering any relevant recommendations from the SWGs and TCC. If one or both Co-Lead positions become vacant during the intersessional period, the SWG shall may designate in a timely manner, by consensus, interim Co-Lead(s) to guide the SWG's work until the next Commission meeting. If both SWG Co-Lead positions become vacant during the intersessional period, the Secretariat shall facilitate nominations for interim Co-Leads with SWG Members. Terms for each Co-Lead position are set for 2-year periods, with the option to renew.

The SWG Co-Leads' roles and responsibilities include:

- Developing the meeting agenda in consultation with Members, CNCPs and the Compliance Manager;

- Leading SWG meetings;
- Finalizing meetings summaries, in coordination with the Compliance Manager;
- Fostering constructive and active dialogue at SWG meetings;
- Providing strategic oversight to the SWG while fostering a consensus-based approach to the design and development of TCC work plan deliverables;
- Coordinating the development of specific deliverables identified in the TCC work plan and regularly reporting on their status to the TCC Chair; and,
- Liaising with the TCC Chair as appropriate.

The Compliance Manager's roles and responsibilities include:

- Coordinating SWG meeting schedules;
- Scheduling and making arrangements for SWG meetings and participating in their proceedings;
- Compiling Member input into the draft meeting agenda;
- Supporting the preparation of meeting documents with the SWG Co-Leads;
- Providing a rapporteur function at meetings and drafting the meeting summaries in coordination with the Co-Leads;
- Providing technical advice, where appropriate, on compliance matters specific to SWG deliverables;
- Monitoring and documenting the status of all SWG deliverables;
- Maintaining version control on SWG documents and deliverables unless the SWG directs otherwise;
- Ensuring information is shared between the SWGs to support integrated planning and achievement of overall TCC work plan objectives;
- Liaising with the TCC Chair, as appropriate;
- Liaising and sharing information with relevant NPFC working bodies; and,
- Tracking the terms of the Co-Leads.

SWG Member roles and responsibilities include:

- Preparing for and participating in the meetings of the SWG;
- Taking on projects to support Member-led initiatives and/or TCC assigned tasks;
- Providing input into the content, design, and preparations of SWG work plan deliverables;
- Liaising, as appropriate, with other SWGs and NPFC working/corresponding groups in support of implementing the TCC work plan, and;
- Designating interim Co-Leads, as necessary.

Meetings

SWGs shall meet online as determined by the SWG Co-Leads, after consultations with Members and CNCs, in conjunction with the TCC Chair, and meetings shall be facilitated by the Secretariat. In the interest of accommodating participation in different time zones, SWG meetings should be held at a consistent time agreed upon by the SWG.

Communications

SWGs will use the NPFC Collaboration Site as their primary platform for communications and information sharing. Email may also be used as appropriate to support timely updates, reminders,

or other relevant correspondence. Some SWG work may be completed electronically between SWG meetings to make the most efficient use of SWG meeting time.

Recommendations

Recommendations of the SWGs to TCC shall be adopted by consensus. Where consensus is not possible at the SWG, differences in opinion shall be reported to TCC.

Language

In accordance with Rule 7 in the Rules of Procedure, English shall be the working language of the SWGs. Any other language may be used on condition that persons doing so provide English interpreters.

Records and Reports

After each SWG meeting, the Compliance Manager shall draft a concise meeting summary, in consultation with the Co-Leads. This summary should include information on the status of work plan items, including any considerations that could impact the scale, scope, timing, or budgetary implications of related deliverables. Where appropriate, advice and recommendations from the SWG Members, Secretariat staff, and other experts should be included in the summaries.

Meeting summaries shall be posted to the Collaboration Site promptly following the SWG meeting. Members may request changes to the meetings summaries, in which case the Compliance Manager, in consultation with the SWG Co-Leads, shall revise the meetings summary accordingly and post a revised version to the Collaboration site. The Compliance Manager shall also send the final meeting summaries to authorized observers.