

Report of the Second Meeting of the Joint Experts Group on Climate Change (JEG-CC)
(Online, 3 October 2024)

1. Opening of the meeting and meeting arrangements

The Chair of the Joint Experts Group on Climate Change (JEG-CC), Dr Kelly A. Kryc (USA), opened the meeting and welcomed participants (the Group) to the virtual meeting. The Executive Secretary also welcomed participants to the meeting, then provided an overview of the delegations from participating CPCs and observers in attendance, as well as an explanation of the decorum standards for virtual meetings

In attendance were Brazil, Canada, China (Rep.), Egypt, the European Union, Japan, Morocco, Norway, Panama, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Chinese Taipei. In addition, two intergovernmental organizations (the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)) attended, and four observers (*Alianza Latinoamericana para la Pesca Sustentable* (ALPESCAS), Ecology Action Centre (EAC), International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), and Pew Charitable Trusts (PEW)) participated.

2. Nomination of the rapporteur

Mr William Harris (Canada) was appointed as rapporteur for the meeting.

3. Adoption of agenda

The Chair opened the floor for any comments on the tentative agenda. There were no comments and the meeting agenda was adopted and is attached as **Appendix 1**.

The list of participants is attached as **Appendix 2**.

4. Consider, revise, and aim to agree on the draft ICCAT Plan of Action on Climate Change

The Chair provided an overview of the draft ICCAT Plan of Action on Climate Change (POA) that was developed during the [Meeting of the Joint Experts Group on Climate Change](#) in July 2024. The Chair then highlighted the three outstanding paragraphs in the draft POA, noting that the primary purpose of the meeting was to address these paragraphs to provide a finalized draft POA to the Commission for its review at the 24th Special Meeting of the Commission in November 2024.

The first outstanding paragraph related to the proposed establishment of a Standing Joint Expert Group on Climate Change (SJEG-CC). Several CPCs emphasized the importance of having a strong dialogue between fisheries scientists and managers at ICCAT, but reiterated their concern that the addition of a new standing working group would exacerbate the current workload issues confronting CPCs and the Secretariat. One CPC further explained that this dialogue is necessary for other issues as well, and not solely for climate change, while another CPC noted that the ultimate objective and expected outcomes of a SJEG-CC remained unclear. Other CPCs expressed their preference for a SJEG-CC or dedicated body as a means to facilitate this dialogue on climate change and other issues. One CPC proposed that the SCRS Subcommittee on Ecosystems and Bycatch (SC-ECO) carry out the work, but others highlighted that managers should have a role in discussions and SC-ECO is a scientific forum. Ultimately, one CPC suggested that the Standing Working Group for Enhancing the Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers (SWGSM) could potentially be considered for this purpose.

CPCs discussed the feasibility of the SWGSM as the forum for facilitating dialogue on climate change and other issues, with several CPCs expressing openness to the idea. However, some CPCs noted that the current terms of reference (TOR) ([Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation by ICCAT for Enhancing the Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers](#)) (Rec. 14-13)) for the SWGSM are outdated, meaning the Recommendation would need to be amended to fit the newly envisioned purpose. The Chair of the SCRS, Dr Craig Brown (USA), added that the SWGSM would be a more suitable forum for

dialogue in comparison to SC-ECO and recalled that the SWGSM had faced challenges with respect to developing decisions as the normal decision-making process at ICCAT required that the discussions of SWGSM be, in effect, reopened and repeated in panel meetings.

Several CPCs stressed that their support for the use of SWGSM was dependent on the appropriate revision of its TOR (e.g. expansion of its scope to include climate change) and its adoption at the 24th Special Meeting of the Commission. It was agreed that a new paragraph in the POA (to replace the outstanding paragraph) would be drafted by the Chair to reflect the discussion.

The second outstanding paragraph related to the title of a standing agenda item (with respect to climate change) on the Commission's plenary agenda at annual meetings. One CPC pointed out that the title of the standing agenda item did not have to be specified, and since there was agreement on this, the proposed title was removed from the paragraph with no other change to the paragraph as a whole.

The third outstanding paragraph related to holding a meeting to review the implementation of the POA, either with an additional meeting of the Joint Experts Group on Climate Change or the first meeting of SJEG-CC. In light of the agreement to use the SWGSM - pending successful adoption of a revised TOR during the annual meeting - it was agreed that a new paragraph (to replace the outstanding paragraph) would be developed to reflect this direction. The Chair proposed that a meeting of the SWGSM be held in 2026 and there were no objections.

Following the conclusion of the review of the outstanding paragraphs, a CPC proposed three amendments to a paragraph in the "Research, data collection, and scientific tools and approaches" section of the draft POA. The first two amendments, which were editorial in nature, were accepted without objection; however, the third proposed amendment, which involved deleting references to the ecosystem approach to fisheries as well as to exploring dynamic reference points, was not incorporated, as the inclusion of this language was the product of a compromise at the [Meeting of the Joint Experts Group on Climate Change](#) in July 2024. Instead, it was agreed that the language would be retained but redrafted to ensure precision and clarity. Another CPC sought clarification on a paragraph related to the consideration of requests for climate-change related funding at the Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (STACFAD). The CPC was concerned that the current formulation could be interpreted as prejudging the decision-making of STACFAD and that the POA did not have the authority to prescribe what requests that STACFAD should prioritize. It was agreed that "and prioritize" would be removed from the paragraph, with no other change to the paragraph as a whole

Taking into account these edits and in the absence of any objections, the Chair confirmed that the amended POA (**Appendix 3**) was considered endorsed by the JEG-CC and would be forwarded to the Commission for consideration and adoption. The Chair will prepare revisions to Rec. 14-13 in line with the group's feedback, with a goal of adopting the amended terms of reference at the 24th Special Meeting of the Commission.

5. Any other matters

No other matters were discussed.

6. Adoption of the report and adjournment

CPCs agreed that the report for the meeting would be adopted by correspondence. The Chair thanked meeting participants for their contributions and flexibility and closed the meeting.

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting and meeting arrangements
2. Nomination of Rapporteur
3. Adoption of agenda
4. Consider, revise, and aim to agree on the draft ICCAT Plan of Action on Climate Change
5. Any other matters
6. Adoption of the report and adjournment

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Revised ICCAT Plan of Action on Climate Change

(Explanatory Note from the Chair of the Meeting of the Joint Experts Group on Climate Change in consultation with the SCRS Chair)

The draft ICCAT Plan of Action on Climate Change was last considered at the 2023 ICCAT Annual Meeting. The document is intended to serve as the workplan, called for in the [Resolution by ICCAT on Climate Change \(Rec. 22-13\)](#) to guide the Commission and the SCRS's future work on relevant issues associated with climate change. The Plan of Action is designed to be a living document that is continually reviewed and revised by the Commission and the SCRS as ICCAT builds upon this line of work.

The [Resolution by ICCAT on next steps of the Joint Experts Group on Climate Change in 2024 \(Res. 23-19\)](#) indicated that the 2024 Meeting of the Joint Experts Group on Climate Change would include a presentation and discussion of a “stock-take” review of relevant ongoing ICCAT work that relates to, or is impacted by, climate change. Then, discussion of the results of the “stock-take” and any other priority areas of climate change work may be accounted for in a revised draft Plan of Action for consideration first by the Joint Experts Group on Climate Change and then the full Commission in November.

Accordingly, I have worked with the Chair of the SCRS to revise the draft Plan of Action based on the results of the “stock-take.” The revised draft Plan of Action follows a similar structure to previous versions and reflects much of the input provided by CPCs at the Annual Meeting. However, there are elements that have been refined to reflect the input provided by the Commission and the SCRS Officers as part of the “stock-take” exercise.

As reflected in the agenda, the Joint Experts Group on Climate Change will have an opportunity to further refine this draft, in line with [Res. 22-13](#), as a key next step to organizing and prioritizing ICCAT's future climate-related work. Adopting an initial Plan of Action will serve as an important tool for ICCAT to focus its resources both internally and externally with other RFMOs and/or international organizations pursuing similar goals of climate-adaptive fisheries management strategies.

Revised ICCAT Plan of Action on Climate Change

(presented by the Climate Change Expert Meeting Chair in consultation with the SCRS Chair and edited during the 2nd Meeting of the Joint Experts Group on Climate Change)

With a view to advancing the implementation of the [Resolution by ICCAT on Climate Change \(Res. 22-13\)](#) and the [Resolution by ICCAT on next steps of the Joint Expert Group on Climate Change in 2024 \(Res. 23-19\)](#), the Commission endorses the following Plan of Action on Climate Change, noting that it is intended to be a living document of priority Commission and SCRS actions that should be reviewed and revised, as appropriate, as new information becomes available:

2024

Commission and SCRS

- *“Stock-take” exercise:* As called for in [Res. 23-19](#), the Chair of the Joint Experts Group on Climate Change, working with the SCRS, its Officers, Commission Officers, and Chairs of Ad Hoc Working Groups as necessary, will prepare and circulate in advance, a ‘stock-take’ review of relevant ongoing ICCAT work which relates to, or is impacted by, Climate Change.
- *Second Meeting of the Joint Experts Group on Climate Change:* As called for in [Res. 23-19](#), convene a Second Meeting of the Joint Experts Group in order to build upon initial discussions held at the 2023 two-day Climate Change Experts Meeting and at the 2023 ICCAT Annual Meeting to explore new or identify existing pathways for the SCRS to further consider and advise the Commission on the issues specified in [Res. 22-13](#), including the opportunity to consider, revise, and aim to agree on the draft ICCAT Plan of Action on Climate Change.

[...]

[...]

[...]

- To provide a dedicated forum to facilitate climate related discussions as envisioned by this Plan of Action and in the Resolution by ICCAT on Climate Change (Res. 22-13), the current Terms of Reference for the Standing Working Group on Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers (SWGSM) (Rec. 14-13) will be revised and considered at the 2024 Annual Meeting.

2025

SCRS

Organization and structure

- Include climate change as an agenda item for SCRS subsidiary bodies, as appropriate, to provide a dedicated time to discuss how the ongoing climate science can benefit the ICCAT management and scientific processes.
- Include climate change as a standing agenda item for the SCRS Plenary meeting to promote coordination and information exchange among SCRS subsidiary bodies and external groups with expertise in the field. As part of the SCRS annual report and other SCRS meeting reports, include as appropriate, updates related to the execution of this Plan of Action. Additionally, include where relevant a section on climate change considerations in the executive summaries for each species group.
- As the SCRS continues work to update the SCRS Strategic Plan, identify opportunities for incorporating climate change considerations in the scientific work of ICCAT, including prioritizing needed scientific research and data collection and specifying associated time frames and resource needs, where possible.

Research, data collection, and scientific tools and approaches

- As outlined by the 2024 stock-take exercise, the SCRS should identify and provide to the Commission for review a draft list of proposed climate-related questions with implications for management that the SCRS can use to continue integrating, as appropriate, climate considerations into management advice to the Commission. These questions could consider the areas of interest already identified by Commission Officers in the stock-take exercise, such as productivity, recruitment, growth, and species distribution as well as how to better reconcile the different timeframes used for climate science and fisheries management.
- In addition to developing these questions, the SCRS should continue advancing the integration of work related to climate as indicated in the 2024 stock-take exercise. This work includes CPUE standardization and incorporation of relevant oceanographic and environmental changes into the stock assessment process, where feasible. In addition, the SCRS should continue to incorporate climate-related considerations into MSEs and Management Procedure (MP) development, continue to develop an Ecosystems Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) framework for ICCAT and an ecosystem report card, and explore dynamic reference points.

Commission and SCRS

- The SCRS should initiate a process early in 2025 to begin drafting climate-related questions with implications for management with a goal that the SCRS subsidiary bodies and SCRS plenary review these questions before being discussed and endorsed by the Commission at their annual meeting.

Commission

- *Commission Agenda:* Starting in 2025, include an agenda item on climate change as a standing item on the Commission's Plenary agenda for the Annual Meeting to review this Plan of Action as needed and consider other relevant issues related to climate change each year, including climate change impacts, mitigation, and adaptation.
- Review, provide feedback, and, if appropriate, endorse the proposed climate-related questions with implications for management drafted by the SCRS.
- Provide feedback to the SCRS on matters stemming from the tasks outlined above.
- *Panel Agendas:* Starting in 2025, incorporate the issue of climate change, as appropriate, into items of the Panel agendas, particularly those agenda items related to conservation and management measures and research.

2026

Commission and SCRS

[...]

- Assuming that revised Terms of Reference (Rec. 14-13, are adopted at the 2024 Annual Meeting, convene a meeting of the Standing Working Group to Enhance Dialogue Between Fisheries Scientists and Managers (SWGSM) to, among other things, review the climate change Plan of Action as well as the list of climate-related management questions for cooperative development with the SCRS.

- *Resource needs analysis:* Working with the ICCAT Secretariat and STACFAD Chair, consider if current human and financial resources are sufficient to undertake research and data collection/evaluation related to climate change in terms of the climate-related management questions developed in cooperation between the SCRS and Commission. The resource needs analysis should include consideration of existing databases and collaboration with other organisations. Based on this analysis, the Commission will consider the need to prioritize questions and tasks for SCRS for progressing the incorporation of climate considerations into management advice.

SCRS

- *Organization and structure:* Following any updates to the Plan of Action, consider if the SCRS meeting structure or operations are fit for purpose to provide scientific advice taking into account climate change impacts on ICCAT target stocks, non-target species, related ecosystems, and other scientific aspects included in [Res. 22-13](#).
- *Research, data collection, and scientific tools and approaches:* The SCRS should continue its work to incorporate climate considerations into scientific processes with the goal of providing advice that is more robust to climate change and supports climate resilient fishery management in ICCAT, while ensuring the robustness of the overall ICCAT management framework.
- *Plan of Action review:* Review this Plan of Action and, as appropriate, suggest revisions and/or provide other relevant feedback to the Commission.

Commission

Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (STACFAD)

- Consider, if appropriate, possible additional approaches to reduce the organization's environmental and climate impacts, including those related to its headquarters operation and meetings.
- Consider any SCRS/ICCAT Secretariat requests for supplementary funds or other resources needed to carry out expanded scientific work associated with climate change.