

Revised ICCAT Plan of Action on Climate Change [CLIM_OCT_03A/i2024]

(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 [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.