

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

**AD HOC WORKING GROUP TO STRENGTHEN THE DIALOGUE AMONG
SCIENTISTS, MANAGERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS ON MANAGEMENT
STRATEGY EVALUATION**

3rd MEETING

(by videoconference)

20-21 April 2026

DOCUMENT MSEWG-03b-03

**DRAFT PLAN TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AND FACILITATE
MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AMONG MANAGERS, SCIENTISTS AND
STAKEHOLDERS ON MATTERS RELATED TO HARVEST
STRATEGIES AND MSE**

Context: The *Ad hoc* Working Group to Strengthen the Dialogue Among Scientists, Managers and other Stakeholders on Management Strategy Evaluation (MSEWG) was established by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) in Resolution C-24-08. The first objective for the group, as outlined in Paragraph 2(a) of the resolution, is to “Improve communication and facilitate mutual understanding among managers and scientists regarding matters related to harvest strategies [also known as management procedures] and MSE within the IATTC.” Additionally, Paragraph 4 of Resolution C-24-08 requires that “Without prejudice to the functions and competencies of the Scientific Advisory Committee to which this Group will report, the duties of the Working Group shall be to make recommendations.” The [1st informal meeting of the group](#) tasked the group’s co-facilitators (now co-chairs), as a priority, with drafting a strategy to ensure the WG fulfills these mandates for review at the first formal meeting of the group in December 2025. Feedback was collected from members, and this updated draft plan represents the input received as a living document, which can be revised at any time, to guide the MSEWG. This communication strategy aims to provide a clear understanding of the structure of the dialogue and communication that can be expected, focusing on the bigeye MSE. This plan is not binding but is understood to be guidance to help facilitate the process going forward.

The MSEWG follows five years of Workshops that began in 2019 to educate IATTC members on the MSE process and collect input from members. Participants in this Working Group are encouraged to review past documents in advance of these meetings to familiarize themselves with the terms defined and progress made so as to not slow progress. See [links to previous meeting documents here](#).

To facilitate the implementation of this plan, the overarching goal established in Resolution C-24-08 is outlined first, along with the purpose of this plan. The plan has seven communications objectives, with specific strategies that will be employed to achieve them. Progress toward achievement of each concrete strategy will be reviewed and evaluated by the MSEWG on an [annual] basis.

OVERARCHING GOAL FROM RES. C-24-08: Improve communication and facilitate mutual understanding among managers and scientists regarding matters related to harvest strategies and MSE. (Paragraph 2a)

PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN: Provide a clear understanding of the structure of the dialogue and communication that can be expected, focusing on the bigeye MSE.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- I. Ensure an inclusive process that fosters multi-directional exchange among fisheries managers, scientists, fishermen, industry personnel, and other stakeholders.
 - Strategy: CPCs are strongly encouraged to ensure consistent participation in their respective delegations at MSEWG meetings, with representatives from diverse groups of stakeholders, including managers, scientists, fishermen, industry personnel, and other relevant stakeholders. Upcoming MSEWG announcements from the Director will reiterate this inclusive stakeholder process.
 - Strategy: Participation by new members in ongoing work implies their acceptance of the process in its current state; previously made recommendations will not be reviewed without a rationale.
 - Strategy - *Scope*: All MSEWG meetings will be open to all CPCs and accredited observers. The group may invite independent experts to provide insights on specific topics when deemed necessary.
 - Strategy - *Use of the floor*: Because of the nature and purpose of these MSEWG meetings, all participants can request the floor rather than going through their flag and the respective head of the delegation.
 - Strategy - *Languages*: Per the Antigua Convention and IATTC Rules of Procedure, all MSEWG meetings will include simultaneous interpretation in English and Spanish. All documents submitted must be translated into both languages. Documents submitted by members other than CPCs must be submitted in both languages.
- II. Ensure a common understanding of the MSE process and its intent to manage fisheries through science-based and pre-agreed management procedures (MPs), also known as harvest strategies.
 - Strategy: All members of the Group should read background materials ahead of meetings in an effort to understand the concepts, components, and basic rules of the MPs and MSE process on equal terms.
 - Strategy: The MSEWG will develop and agree on a glossary of MSE-related terms. This information will be posted on the IATTC website [on a new page dedicated to the MSEWG and its business or in any implemented communications platform].
 - Strategy: The MSEWG will hold two virtual meetings to present and explain the scope of different harvest strategies, using the document WSMSE-05-01 as a guide to provide CPCs with a range of options to explore.
 - Strategy: The MSEWG will provide input to the IATTC staff and Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) on a set of standard plots and tables for presenting MSE results, thereby creating consistent and familiar reporting that facilitates understanding.

- III. Ensure MSEWG participants can prepare to meaningfully engage in meetings.
- Strategy: The MSEWG co-chairs should work with the IATTC Secretariat to distribute an annotated agenda and relevant documents, at least [2 weeks, one month] in advance of each meeting, detailing what CPCs should be prepared to discuss under each agenda item.
 - Strategy: The MSEWG co-chairs should work with the IATTC Secretariat to share meeting reports with CPCs within one month after each meeting.
 - Strategy: The MSEWG co-chairs may consider if deploying web-based, user-friendly platforms and tools would be helpful to improve online engagement, as previously approved by the MSEWG, allowing CPCs to connect with diverse (domestic) stakeholders, exchange content, and participate in discussions.
 - Strategy: Without prejudice to proposals that members may make and in addition to them, the MSEWG co-chairs should maintain an updated draft timeline and workplan for implementing the bigeye MSE, for approval by the MSEWG and in alignment with the objectives of the SAC.
- IV. Ensure stakeholders' views are considered at each stage of the MSE process.
- Strategy: The MSEWG will receive from its members input from stakeholders on the following, starting with bigeye tuna, while taking into account the multi-species, multi-fleet, multi-gear, and multi-stock nature of the fisheries under the purview of the IATTC, as well as the MSE and MP standards adopted or in progress in other RFMOs:
 - Uncertainties to be considered in the MSE operating models;
 - Data to be used in the MSE and required for the implementation of management procedures;
 - Management objectives, including reference points and performance indicators;
 - Candidate Harvest Control Rules (HCRs) as a key element of various MPs to be tested;
 - Feedback on MSE results, including requests for additional testing; and
 - Selection of a final management procedure.
 - Strategy: The MSEWG will meet in person or virtually, depending on the schedule approved by the group. Bearing in mind that in-person meetings are more effective and therefore preferable for decision-making, but are more costly, a virtual meeting could be held for educational or informational purposes, or to gather relevant points of view for the development of the expected results.
 - Strategy: Maintain active stakeholder consultations between meetings to ensure ongoing communication with the CPCs and adherence to the agreed response times. User-friendly web tools are ideal for this, as they allow tracking of feedback exchanges and materials.
- V. Facilitate an understanding of how MSE has worked in other RFMOs to serve as a guide and lessons learned for MSE processes at IATTC.
- Strategy: Maintain up-to-date information about the MSE development and MP implementation processes at other RFMOs, including candidate and final MP elements, on the IATTC website [on a new page dedicated to the MSEWG and its business or in any implemented communications platform].
- VI. Ensure the MSEWG pursues a dynamic and ongoing review of MPs once implemented.

- Strategy: The MSEWG will review the implementation of MPs, including whether their objectives are being met and/or need to be modified, and whether exceptional circumstances are occurring.
 - Strategy: After implementing MPs, the MSEWG will identify evaluation criteria based on requests from various sectors and stakeholder interests. These criteria will include an implementation schedule, enabling decisions about whether to make changes, improve, or continue with the MP that has been implemented.
- VII. Clarify the process for delivery and consideration of the MSEWG's recommendations.
- Strategy: Create standing agenda items for MSEWG reports on the agendas of both the SAC and Commission annual meetings.

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