

14th MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

7 to 12 September 2026, Tórshavn, Faroe Islands

SC 14 – Doc 07

Secretariat's Science related activities

Secretariat

1. Summary

This paper summarises the Secretariat's science related activities over the past year, which have included appointment of the new Science Manager, [external meetings](#), [project inputs](#) and [data releases](#).

The SC14 is invited to

- *note the contents of this paper*
- *provide any views or recommendations on the reported activities and future Secretariat activities in support of the Scientific Committee, including future SPRFMO-CPPS science cooperation*

2. Background

Each year the Secretariat reports to the SC on its science related activities over the course of the year (most recently [SC13-Doc07](#)). This includes internal staffing, data releases, cooperation activities, and implementation of responsibilities and instructions set out in the prior year's SC meeting report and the SC Multiannual Workplan.

3. Secretariat Staffing

Ms Jessica Fuller was appointed as the new SPRFMO Science Manager in May 2026 (Ref: G49-2026) and started in the role on 3 August 2026. This appointment follows the decisions to recruit and then budget for the position at the 12th and 13th Annual meetings of the Commission, respectively.

The appointment significantly increases the capacity of the Secretariat to support the work of the Scientific Committee. The appointment was made in consultation with the Chairperson of the Scientific Committee as required by SPRFMO Staff Regulation 2.2. This included the drafting of the position description (Annex 1), which was based on the 2023 SC recommendation (SC11-report, paragraph 47) and SC12 discussions and identification of important Science Manager traits.

4. External meetings and cooperation

4.1 Common Oceans Program: The [Common Oceans Program](#) is a global partnership funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), promoting sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) with a particular focus on tuna and deep-sea fisheries, the Sargasso Sea, and cross-sectoral cooperation. Led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Program brings together the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), regional fisheries management organizations, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, civil society, and academia.



- 4.2** SPRFMO is a project partner of the [Deep-sea fisheries project](#). The Secretariat participates in some of its initiatives and disseminates these to Members as required, as well as reporting to the SC and Commission. The Secretariat, the Deepwater Working Group (DWWG) Chairperson, and Members participated in a number of project activities over the year, which are summarised here and the details elaborated on in SC14-Obs01.

The Executive Secretary attended a workshop on cross-sectoral interactions with deep-sea fisheries (24-26 September 2025 at FAO HQ), the 3rd Project Steering Committee meeting (Tokyo, 17-19 March 2026) and contributed to work on the practical application of the precautionary approach and ecosystem-based approach in deep sea fisheries, including virtual participation in a related interview and workshop. The Coordination and Communications Officer participated in a workshop on communications, engagement and outreach, in relation to the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (17-19 June at FAO HQ). Secretariat staff participated in a virtual workshop on toothfish management (4 & 6 August 2026) where the DWWG Chair presented on SPRFMO's regime.

Through these workshops, the SPRFMO context was represented and accommodated in the FAO project and wider discussions. FAO support was also secured for various SPRFMO activities including co-funding of data capacity building work and technical work on VMEs, toothfish and sharks. The project is in its final year and the Secretariat remains engaged with the FAO on how a possible new project might be designed and how this could accommodate the needs of SPRFMO.

- 4.3** SPRFMO is a Project Steering Committee member of the [Cross-Sectoral Project](#) (CSP). The CSP is working with the Southeast Pacific and Pacific Islands as two initial pilot regions, i.e., 14 Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) members and 4 *Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur* (CPPS) members. The Secretariat engaged with the Project by taking part in the population analysis survey aimed to gather insights (background, learning styles, knowledge) from potential participants, shaping a tailored training curriculum for enhancing capacity for ABNJ cooperation and biodiversity conservation.
- 4.4 ACAP:** The Executive Secretaries of SPRFMO and ACAP held an introductory meeting in August 2025 on cooperation opportunities. This then included a SPRFMO presentation in September 2025 to the workshop of the FAO deep-sea fisheries project on Deep-sea Fisheries Cross-sectoral Interactions on lessons from the MoU as a model for cooperation between sectoral bodies.
- 4.5 CCAMLR:** Under the SPRFMO-CCAMLR Arrangement, the two Secretariats continue to cooperate on science and data related issues, including data management and data exchange. The SPRFMO Secretariat continues to share details of toothfish releases and recaptures in the SPRFMO Area with the CCAMLR Secretariat as foreseen in the Arrangement. The CCAMLR Secretariat provides a report annually to SPRFMO on recaptures that came from fish tagged in SPRFMO, and SPRFMO recaptures that were tagged in CCAMLR. The Executive Secretary met with the new CCAMLR Executive Director, and the annual cooperation meeting between the wider staff of the two Secretariats is planned for late August to take stock of activities and further cooperation.
- 4.6 CPPS:** The CPPS Director of Scientific Affairs and Fisheries Resources (Mr Edwin Pinto) attended COMM14 and engaged with Members in the margins of the meeting. The Executive Secretary and Science Manager had an introductory call in August with the new CPPS Secretary General (Mr Salvador Vega Telias) and Mr Pinto. The value of the CPPS-SPRFMO MOU was reaffirmed and areas for further cooperation discussed. Subject to the interests and priorities of the Members of SPRFMO and CPPS, potential science areas identified for cooperation were the role of science in future regional governance developments (e.g., BBNJ processes); the impact of the El Niño effect on fisheries (e.g., stock dynamics and related ecosystems); and sustainable squid management in shared areas of interest.



5. Data releases

The Secretariat received ad-hoc data requests submitted by some Members to support national assessments, ecological risk analyses, and the preparation of statutory reports. Each request is screened for consistency with SPRFMO confidentiality provisions, validated against the current data standards, and delivered in the requester's preferred format.

The following ad-hoc data request was fulfilled: Australian request for data pertaining to the historical catch (presence/absence) of the deepwater chondrichthyan species

6. SC Requests to Secretariat

Document	Request	Status
SC13-Report		
Para 88	The SC ... encouraged the continued contribution of Members and the SPRFMO Secretariat to the FAO DSF Project.	This has continued, as reported above.
Para 138	The SC further recommended: that the SPRFMO Secretariat liaise with FAO, AquaMaps and IUCN to ensure that existing historical catch data of vulnerable chondrichthyans, teleosts and commercially important invertebrates are being included in their models to inform the predicted distribution of these species. The SC noted that the FAO maps are a legacy product that are no longer being updated.	In progress: The Secretariat has received the updated FAO ASFIS List of Species for Fishery Statistics Purposes (2026.1), which strengthens the standardisation and cross-referencing of SPRFMO species data. This provides a useful foundation for the next stage of engagement with FAO, AquaMaps and IUCN to confirm whether SPRFMO historical catch data are reflected in relevant species-distribution models and to identify any opportunities for further data contribution.
Para 265	The SC agreed to include climate change considerations in the Exploratory Fisheries FOP template, the template was updated (Annex 21) and the SC tasked the Secretariat to update the copy on the SPRFMO website accordingly.	The 2025 updated template is linked through the Science section of the website (https://www.sprfmo.int/science) and on the Fisheries Operation Plans section of CMM 13 on the website (https://www.sprfmo.int/fisheries/conservation-and-management-measures/cmm-13-exploratory-fisheries/fisheries-operation-plans)
SC Workplan		
Jack Mackerel assessment	Experts support during SC assessment	Ms Lee Qi was engaged to support the Workshop on Jack Mackerel Benchmarking held 18-22 May 2026 in Lima, Peru and engaged to support assessment work in SC14.
Squid workshop	Squid Workshop including potential assessment techniques, abundance indices and simulated assessment; to be held in person	A Squid Stock Assessment Workshop (SCW18) was held 29 July – 1 August 2026 in Shanghai, China. A technical expert (Ms Lee Qi) was engaged to provide technical guidance and expertise to SCW18 and assist with the further development of jumbo flying squid stock assessment and simulated assessment work. The Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) was separately engaged to support research activities related to the simulated assessment and management strategy evaluation (MSE) of the Jumbo Flying Squid.



Seabird bycatch	Summarise and characterise seabird bycatch-related data held by the Secretariat and to work with interested Members and ACAP to identify any future potential improvements to data collection and reporting processes.	Seabird bycatch continues to be reported as part of the wider summary of SPRFMO Bycatch Records (SC14-Doc10). The Secretariat has not been approached by interested Members or ACAP since COMM14 on further work but stands ready to support them.
Cooperation	FAO ABNJ Deep Sea Fisheries: coordinate activities over their next five-year plan that could involve Member scientists and a number of SPRFMO science projects	Participation in the DSF project has continued, as reported above. This has included facilitating the involvement of Member scientists. The DWG Chairperson, SGNTT Coordinator, and several Member scientists participated in the work and meetings of this project.
Cooperation	CPPS: Increase cooperation and collaboration between both organisations.	This has continued, as reported above.
Secretariat Scientific Support	Continue with analyses of catch composition and fishing activities; support CPUE analyses; and general scientific analyses, as capacity allows.	The appointment of the Science Manager will strengthen the Secretariat's capacity in this respect.



Annex 1: Position Description Science Manager

1. Nature of Duties

1.1. *Broad Job description*

The Science Manager is responsible for ensuring that the scientific advisory needs of the Commission are delivered.

In particular, the Science Manager assists the Scientific Committee (SC) in its functions as per Article 10 of the [SPRFMO Convention](#):

- plan, conduct and review scientific assessments of the status of fishery resources;
- provide advice and recommendations to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies;
- encourage and promote cooperation in scientific research and,
- provide other scientific advice to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies as it considers appropriate, or as may be requested by the Commission.

The Science Manager supports Members in the coordination and implementation of the Scientific Committee Multiannual Workplan adopted by the Commission, analyses the data collected and exchanged through the relevant CMMs (particularly CMMs 02 (Data Standards), 13, 14 (exploratory fisheries) and 16 (Observer Programme)) and is responsible for the Science area of the SPRFMO website.

The Science Manager reports to the Executive Secretary, working in close cooperation with the Data Manager, Compliance Manager and the Chairperson of the Scientific Committee.

The duties require occasional travel to participate in annual SPRFMO meetings, meetings of the SC and its working groups, other approved scientific related meetings (e.g., IGO, NGO), and to respond to SPRFMO Member and CNCP requests as required.

1.2. *Key functions*

1. Lead the scientific work of the SPRFMO Secretariat providing support to the Scientific Committee and its Chairperson, and guidance and technical support to the staff and SPRFMO Members on scientific matters;
 - i. Organise, coordinate and support intersessional working group activities and produce the associated reports;
 - ii. Support the planning and conduct of stock assessments of SPRFMO species, including the provision of clean datasets for stock assessments and other SC activities.
 - iii. Develop and advance analytical work to support the Multiannual Scientific Committee Workplan and the ongoing work and objectives of the Working Groups
 - iv. Source additional funding to advance the SC Workplan
 - v. Project manage and oversee grants that support scientific research in SPRFMO.
2. Leading the science related work approved by the Commission, particularly as:
 - i. Observer Programme Coordinator focusing on the accreditation process, the annual reporting on the progress towards the objectives of the CMM16 and the analysis of the Observer data ensuring that the best information is timely available for the Scientific Committee;
 - ii. A point of contact for other Science programmes of relevance to SPRFMO while promoting and encouraging cooperation in scientific research;



- iii. Providing scientific expertise to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies as they consider appropriate, or as may be requested by the Commission
 - iv. Supporting the Implementation of the Multiannual Scientific Committee Workplan; and
 - v. Following up on recommendations contained in the Scientific Committee Report.
3. Organises and attends Scientific Committee and working group meetings, assists the Chairpersons of the SC and its working groups and produces meeting reports;
 4. Manage contracts and contractors of science related service providers, and from time to time supervises interns and secondees;
 5. Evaluate, analyse and report scientific data collected and exchanged through relevant CMMs, contained in databases or obtained during the normal course of Secretariat operations;
 6. Draft scientific background material and communicates on the results of the science related work;
 7. Advise the Executive Secretary on all science related matters;
 8. Liaise with the SPRFMO Data Manager to ensure the timely availability of data required for scientific processes;
 9. Enhance SPRFMO's reputation through effective leadership, evolving process improvements and using innovative approaches to meeting fisheries science outputs;
 10. Communicate science related matters to SPRFMO Members, CNCPs and externally, through presentations at conferences, seminars, workshops, etc;
 11. Maintain domestic and international situational awareness of fisheries science and fisheries management environments and trends;
 12. Build and maintain international science networks (e.g. with science officials in other relevant RFMOs and IGOs), including through the development and implementation of formal cooperation arrangements.