

P1 (1.2.1) update to the pre-assessment and scoping document of WCPO skipjack tuna against the Marine Stewardship Council Fisheries Standard

Confidential Report
Version 1.0

Prepared by

by Key Traceability Ltd.
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Contents

Glossary.....	3
1. Update Executive Summary.....	4
2. Report Details	5
2.1. The MSC Fisheries Standard.....	5
2.2. Version Details.....	6
2.3. Principle 1 update.....	7
3. Recommendations and Scoping	11
4. References for update	12
Appendices.....	13
Assessment information	13
Small-scale fisheries.....	13
Evaluation processes and techniques	13
Site visits	13
Recommendations for stakeholder participation in full assessment.....	13
Harmonised Fishery Assessments	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Glossary

Acronym	Definition
CoC	Chain of Custody
CPUE	Catch per Unit Effort
FIP	Fishery Improvement Programme
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
PI	Performance Indicators
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
UoA	Unit of Assessment

1. Update Executive Summary

This document presents the results of a P1 element scoring update for WCPO skipjack tuna against the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Fisheries Standard for sustainable fishing (Version 2.01).

The purpose of this update is to rescore MSC PIs 1.2.1 (Harvest Strategy) with new evidence, particularly the outcome of the 2022 WCPFC annual meeting which adopted a Management Procedure for the WCPO skipjack tuna stock.

With this updated assessment, all MSC Principle 1 Performance Indicators relating to WCPO skipjack tuna achieve SG80.

2. Report Details

2.1. The MSC Fisheries Standard

There are three principles in the MSC standard:

Principle 1 – Sustainable fish stocks, target fish stocks must be kept at a sustainable level.

Principle 2 – Minimising environmental impacts, the fishery should be managed in a way that maintains the structure, productivity, function, and diversity of the fisheries ecosystem.

Principle 3 – Effective management, the fishery must have a responsive management system in place and management must meet all local, national, and international laws.

Fisheries assessed against the MSC Fisheries Standard are evaluated against 28 Performance Indicators (PIs) within the three principles. There are six performance indicators for Principle 1, split between two components, outcome (2 PIs) and management (4 PIs). Principle 2 has 15 performance indicators split into three components (outcome, management strategy, information) for primary species, secondary species, endangered threatened and protected species, habitats, and ecosystem. Principle 3 has seven performance indicators split between two components, governance, and policy (3 PIs) and fishery specific management system (4 PIs).

PIs are scored for the fishery based on the MSC specific scoring guidelines (SGs). For a fishery to be certified, the fishery must score a minimum of 60 against all 28 PIs and an average of 80 across each of the three principles. Performance indicators that score between 60 and 79 will be given a condition to achieve a score of 80 or above within a specific timeframe. After certification, the fishery will undergo annual audits and will be re-assessed every five years.

The purpose of this pre-assessment is to evaluate the status of the fishery in relation to the MSC Fisheries Standard and to identify deficiencies. A pre-assessment cannot fully duplicate a full assessment against the MSC standard. A full assessment involves expert team members and public consultation stages that are not included in a pre-assessment. A pre-assessment provides a provisional assessment of a fishery based on a limited set of information provided by the client; its conclusions as to the outcome of a full assessment are always somewhat uncertain.

The following key constraints were identified which may influence the outcome of an eventual full assessment:

- No site visit was held for this pre-assessment because of the travel involved. Stakeholders were therefore not consulted.
- No data directly relating to the fishery was collected, this means that scoring has been by extrapolation, especially in relation to bycatch and ETP species under Principle 2.
- This pre-assessment only looks at the regional and sub-regional management. This would need to be considered prior to commencing a full assessment for this fishery.
- Traceability systems in place in the fisheries were not analysed, and it is recommended this is investigated prior to full assessment to ensure compliance with fishery assessment traceability requirements and ascertain whether separate Chain of Custody (CoC) certification at the vessel level will be needed.

2.2. Version Details

The report uses the MSC Fisheries Standard v2.01, the Fisheries Certification Process v2.2 and MSC pre-assessment reporting template v3.1. The default assessment tree was used without adjustments. The Risk-Based Framework (RBF) was not used.

The MSC decision rule for reaching the final recommendation is as follows:

- No PIs can score below 60.
- The aggregate score for each Principle, rounded to the nearest whole number, is 80 or above.

The aggregate score for each Principle is the sum of the weighted score of each PI within that Principle.

2.3. Principle 1 update

3.4.1 WCPO skipjack scoring update

For this update, WCPO skipjack can receive a scoring update from SG60-79 to SG80 (1.2.1). This has been possible due to the new adoption of a Management Procedure at the WCPFC annual meeting in 2022.

Performance Indicator	Draft scoring range	Data deficient?
1.2.1 – Harvest Strategy	≥80	No
Rationale or key points		
<p>Harvest Strategy: During the 2022 WCPFC annual meeting (WCPFC 19) it was agreed to adopt a Management Procedure for skipjack. Up until this decision, CMM 2021-01 acted as a bridge to the adoption of a harvest strategy.</p> <p>Objective:</p> <p>1. The objective of the interim Management Procedure (MP) for skipjack tuna, is to ensure that:</p> <p>a) the spawning potential depletion ratio of skipjack tuna is maintained on average in the long-term at around the target reference point; and</p> <p>b) the spawning potential depletion ratio of skipjack tuna is maintained above the limit reference point with a risk of the limit reference point being breached no greater than 20 percent</p> <p>Reference Points</p> <p>The reference points are:</p> <p>a) Target reference point: Calculated on the basis of two spawning potential depletion values, where spawning potential depletion is expressed as a percentage of the estimated average spawning potential in the absence of fishing for the relevant 10-year period ($SB_{recent}/SBF=0, t1-t2$) as defined in paragraph 3 and using the median values across the grid of assessment models as agreed by the WCPFC Scientific Committee. The first value represents the estimated average depletion of the skipjack tuna stock over the four-year period 2018-2021. The second value represents the long-term median equilibrium stock depletion that would be reached under the agreed baseline fishing conditions for skipjack tuna (purse seine effort at 2012 levels, pole and line effort at average 2001-04 levels, and the domestic fisheries in assessment region 5 at average 2016-18 levels). The target reference point is the average of these two values (weighting of 50/50). The target reference point is estimated from the 2022 WCPO skipjack tuna stock assessment at 50 per cent of $SBF=0$.</p> <p>b) Limit reference point: 20 percent of the estimated recent average spawning potential in the absence of fishing, ($SBF=0, t1-t2$).</p>		

3. The method to be used in estimating $S_{B_{recent}}/S_{B_{F=0}}$, t_1-t_2 shall be:

- a) $S_{B_{recent}}$ is the average estimated spawning potential across the last four years of the most recent stock assessment time period;
- b) $S_{B_{F=0}}$, t_1-t_2 is the average of the estimated spawning potential in the absence of fishing for a time window of ten years based on the most recent skipjack tuna stock assessment, where $t_1=y_{last-10}$ to $t_2=y_{last-1}$ where y_{last} is the last year within the assessment; and
- c) The estimation shall be based on the relevant estimates of recruitment that have been adjusted to reflect conditions without fishing according to the stock recruitment relationship

Elements of the MP

The MP includes:

- a) The Harvest Control Rule
 - b) The Estimation Model using the settings set out in Annex II;
 - c) Data Requirements and the Monitoring Strategy set out in Annex III;
 - d) The procedure for Exceptional Circumstances set out in Annex IV; and
 - e) The provision for Special Circumstances set out in Annex

Harvest control rule: A harvest control rule was agreed under the adoption of a CMM management procedure for skipjack at WCPFC 19 in 2022. The harvest control rule is outlined in Figure 1. Features include:

- a) The input to the harvest control rule is the estimated spawning potential depletion ratio for the latest estimation year ($S_{B_{latest}}/S_{B_{F=0}}$, t_1-t_2), where $S_{B_{latest}}$ is the estimated spawning potential in the last year of data within the estimation model and $S_{B_{F=0}}$;
- b) The output from the harvest control rule is a scalar (multiplier) that adjusts future catch or effort relative to a baseline of 2012 values.;
- c) All fisheries are scaled equally. Scalars apply to effort for purse seine fisheries, and to catch for all other fisheries; and d) For each 3-year management period, the harvest control rule uses the estimate of stock status ($S_{B_{latest}}/S_{B_{F=0}}$, t_1-t_2), as determined by the Estimation Model, to calculate a scalar that adjusts catches or effort up or down relative to 2012 effort levels.

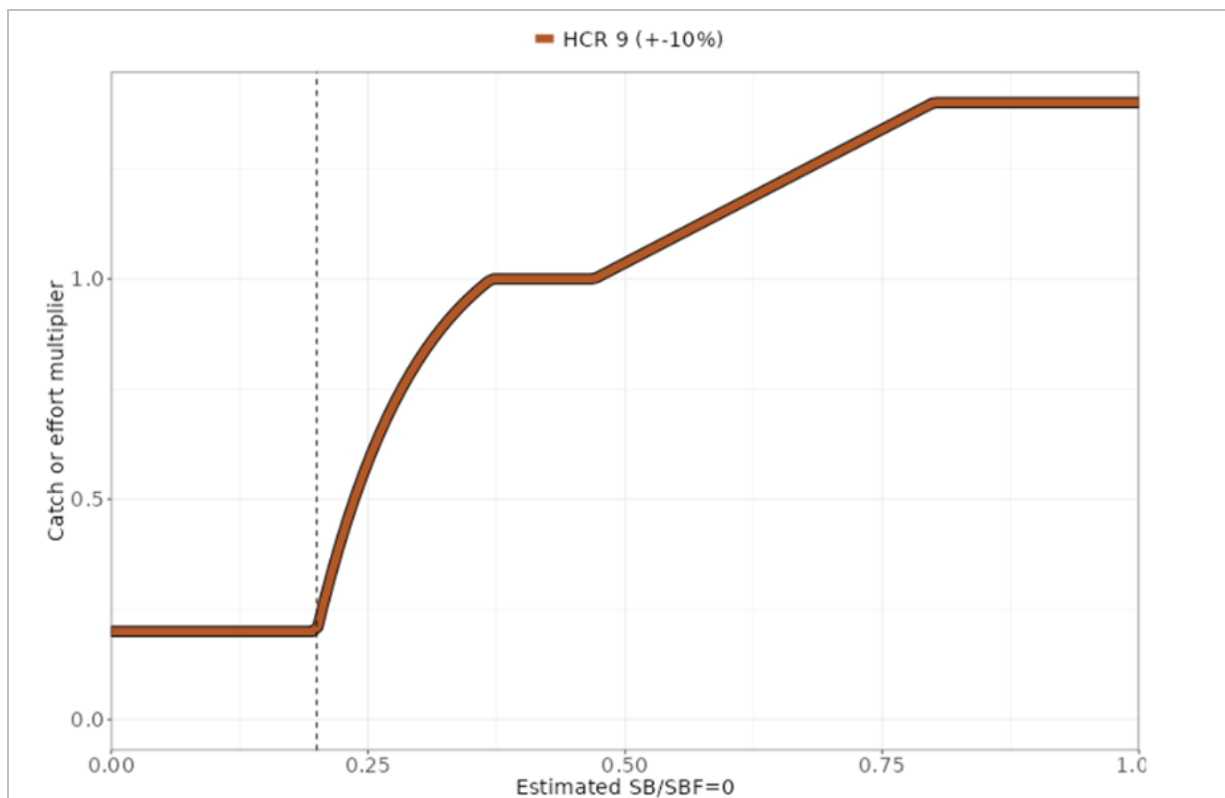


Figure 1. Harvest control rule

The harvest control rule formulation is provided in WCPFC-SC18-2022/MI-WP-03. The parameters are as follows:

Type = 'asymptotic_Hillary_step_constrained'

SB/SBF=0 min 0.2

SB/SBF=0 max 0.8

Out_min 0.2

Out_max 1.4

SB/SBF=0_step_min 0.2

SB/SBF=0_step_max 0.55

Step_height 1.0

Curve 10

Max_change_up 1.10

Max_change_down 0.9

Management Strategy Evaluation: Ongoing work under a mixed fishery framework that involves developing stock specific Management Procedures for skipjack, South Pacific albacore and bigeye, in line with the agreed WCPFC harvest strategy workplan. The interaction of these MPs, as well as their impact on yellowfin, would then be evaluated using a combined evaluation framework.

3. Recommendations and scoping

There is no need to update this section for this update as the scoring update of WCPO skipjack tuna regarding Principle 1 of the MSC standard achieves SG 80.

4. References for update

Conservation and Management Measure on a Management Procedure for WCPO Skipjack Tuna. WCPFC19-2022-DP04. 28 October 2022. Da Nang City, Vietnam, 28 November to 3 December 2022.

Appendices

Assessment information

Small-scale fisheries

No small-scale fisheries were identified for any of the UoAs listed in this pre-assessment.

Evaluation processes and techniques

Site visits

A site visit was not conducted for this pre-assessment.

Recommendations for stakeholder participation in full assessment

Stakeholders were not conducted for this site visit. However, for the full assessment it will be important to engage with the following groups of stakeholders:

- Overlapping fisheries (certified and in assessment).
- Overlapping Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs).
- NGOs with an interest in the fishery.
- Regional Fisheries Management Organisations.
- National management authorities for which the fisheries may operate.

