



*17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the  
International Scientific Committee  
for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean  
Vancouver, Canada  
12-17 July 2017*

**Draft Terms of Reference  
for 2017 Peer Review of ISC Function**

**July 2017**

## I. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In order to undertake a review of the function of the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) in accordance with Section C9 of the 'Rules and Procedures for Conduct of the ISC and Subsidiary Bodies' (ISC Operations Manual 2016):

*C9. Peer review of function.* Every five years, or more frequently as may be decided, the Committee shall organize a panel of three recognized peers with no Committee affiliation, to review the function of the Committee and subsidiary bodies and to offer recommendations for improvement.

Keeping in mind the two major purposes of the ISC (ISC Operations Manual 2016),

1. To enhance scientific research and cooperation for conservation and rational utilization of the species of tuna and tuna-like fishes which inhabit the North Pacific Ocean during a part or all of their life cycle;
2. To establish the scientific groundwork for the conservation and rational utilization of these species in this region;

The charge for the 2017 Peer Review Panel (PRP) is to

**Review, evaluate, and provide recommendations to improve the ISC procedures for independent peer review of its fishery stock assessments and their effectiveness in allowing ISC to meet its purpose.**

## II. SCOPE AND TASKS FOR THE 2017 REVIEW

In relation to ISC's stock assessment review process, the PRP's assignment will be to:

Recommend an efficient, timely, rigorous, transparent and independent review process of stock assessments conducted by ISC appropriate for the species, fisheries, and data available to ISC. With regard to this task, the PRP will consider the following:

1. Species/stocks/fisheries on which ISC conducts stock assessments.
2. Availability of data to ISC members for stock assessment purposes.
3. Selection of stock assessment and projection methods, including assessment and projection models, input parameters, model specifications, and inherent assumptions.
4. Selection of research priorities to improve the stock assessment including data analysis and gathering, life history, and modeling.
5. Timing, duration and frequency of ISC working group meetings and their role in completing stock assessments.
6. Collaborations among member scientists and with other scientists.
7. The organizational structure of ISC and its membership.
8. Availability of resources, including funding, ISC staff time, and member scientists' capabilities and time.
9. ISC goals, objectives, and purpose (ISC Operations Manual 2016).

Panelists may also want to consider the peer review process under development in WCPFC, noting there are differences in structure and function between the WCPFC and ISC.

<https://www.wcpfc.int/system/files/GN-WP-05%20Process%20for%20the%20independent%20review%20of%20stock%20assessment-final.pdf>).

### III. RESPONSIBILITIES

#### A. ISC Member Responsibilities

Three ISC Member countries (Sponsors), identified at ISC16, will each be responsible for the cost and support required for one review panelist each. These three peer review panelists will make up the PRP who will address this Terms of Reference (TOR). The three Sponsors will provide assistance to the panelists so that they can complete their responsibilities outlined in this TOR in the defined timeframe. The Sponsors will update the ISC Chair and ISC Plenary in 2017 regarding the status of the panelist's work. The Sponsors will apprise the Chair in a timely manner and work with the Chair and the panelist to address any issues, as soon as possible.

All Members will be responsible for cooperating with the identified panelists and ensuring that their staff and scientists also cooperate. Members will review the completed panelists' Final Report addressing this Terms of Reference when it is completed in advance of ISC18 and be prepared to provide the ISC Chair feedback in a timely fashion.

#### B. ISC Chair Responsibilities

The ISC Chair will ensure that the TOR is met and work with Sponsors to ensure they complete their responsibilities. The ISC Chair will designate one of the three panelists as a PRP Chair. The ISC Chair will review progress of the PRP. The ISC Chair will provide panelists with all necessary documents for the review in addition to any needed information on contacting ISC Working Group members.

#### C. Peer Review Panel (PRP) Responsibilities

The PRP will address the questions regarding the ISC's function as outlined above in Section II, Scope and Tasks for the 2017 Review. They will provide status reports to their respective Sponsors and the ISC Chair according to the timeline in Section V. Panelists will attend and observe one Working Group leading up to an assessment that year, but they will not participate or interfere in the Working Group. They will also attend and observe one Plenary session (ISC17 in July 2017, Vancouver, Canada). Panelists will not discuss their findings, distribute their notes or report to the public. They will only distribute their draft reports to the ISC Chair and Vice Chair, as specified in the timeline below, or as otherwise agreed.

The PRP will provide one Final Report on the agreed upon dates as outlined in Section V, Timeline. The Final Report will describe the PRP's recommendations addressing Section II of this TOR, following the report format as specified in Section IV, Output. A draft of

this report and then a Final Report will be provided to the ISC Chair and ISC Vice-Chair as outlined in Section V, Timeframe.

**D. ISC Working Group Responsibilities**

Working Group Chairs and members will allow Panelists to observe Working Group meetings and provide documents requested by the Reviewers. They will provide the Panelists time for interviews, if requested.

**E. Peer Review Panel (PRP) Chair Responsibilities**

The PRP Chair will develop a Panel work plan in conjunction with the ISC Chair. The PRP Chair will facilitate the review according to the PRP work plan to accomplish the stated goals and objectives articulated within this TOR, and will coordinate among the Panelists to produce a single Final Report following the report format as specified in Section IV, Output.

**IV. OUTPUT: SUGGESTED TEMPLATE FOR PRP FINAL REPORT**

The report should be in pdf format, shall be a stand-alone independent peer review report for others to understand the responses to TOR questions, and shall include the following in order to address Section II of this TOR:

**A. Executive Summary providing a concise summary of the findings and recommendations addressing Section II**

**B. Sections describing specific observations and conclusions regarding each of the following:**

- Detail the recommended review process as requested under Section II of this TOR under three cost scenarios (low, medium, high), including detailed descriptions of proposed process, timelines, and personnel time involved. Clearly define the respective roles and responsibilities in the recommended review process as well as general timeframes given assessment and management cycles for the given stocks and fisheries.
- Describe how the recommended review processes adequately allow for ISC to fulfill its purposes, goals, and objectives as provided in the ISC Operations Manual (2016) and noted in Section I.

**C. A description of the review activities completed during the review, including panel membership, a list of ISC participants interviewed and their respective roles, and a bibliography of materials provided for the review.**

**D. Conclusions and Recommendations**

**V. TIMEFRAME**

July 2016	ISC members review and approve Framework, identify Sponsors and convene a small working group to develop this peer review TOR.
September 2016	Sponsors consult with ISC Chair and vice-Chair on selection of panelists.
October 2016	ISC Chair announces formation of the Peer Review Panel (PRP) and its Terms of Reference.
November 2016	PRP chair develops work plan and provides to ISC Chair.
March 2017	PRP attends a Working Group meeting (timing is approximate).
April 2017	PRP chair and ISC Chair review progress; first status report due.
July 2017	PRP attends ISC17 Plenary.
September 2017	First Draft of PRP's report delivered to ISC Chair and Vice Chair for review.
October 2017	PRP Final Report delivered to ISC Chair and Vice Chair, who distribute to ISC Members.
July 2018	PRP Final Report considered by ISC18 for action.

**VI. REFERENCES**

2016. International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean, Operations Manual. Available at:  
[http://isc.fra.go.jp/pdf/ISC\\_OperationsManual\\_May2016.pdf](http://isc.fra.go.jp/pdf/ISC_OperationsManual_May2016.pdf)