

La Réunion, Wednesday 7th of September 2022

SC- CIRCULAR n° 2022/18

SUBJECT: 2022/23 Scientific Committee work plan

Dear Heads of Delegation of the Scientific Committee,

Dear Colleagues

The SIOFA Scientific Committee workplan was endorsed by the MoP at its 2022 meeting. In addition to the Scientific Committee workplan, MoP9 tasked the Scientific Committee with items to review or prepare advice for the MoP.

The updated Scientific Committee Workplan, including requests from MoP, is summarised below. I thank the vice-Chair of the Scientific Committee, the Chairs of the science working groups, and the Secretariat for their work in putting together this summary.

I note that SC8 meeting will be hosted by the EU in 2023. The SERAWG, PAEWG, and SC will be held as a combined meeting from 22 to 31 March 2023 in Tenerife, Spain. The joint MoP-SC workshop on harvest strategy pre-assessment will take place from 17 to 18 March 2023, and the workshop on deepwater sharks in the SIOFA Area will take place from 20 to 21 March 2023. Meeting agendas and specific meeting arrangements will be circulated towards the end of 2022.

The proposed timetable of workshops and meetings in advance of SC8 is given below (Table 1). I note that the days of some of these have been adjusted from those presented at MoP9 to accommodate other international and RFMO meeting schedules.

The list of current consultancies is also given below (Table 2), along with the updated Scientific Committee Workplan.

I **request** that SC HoDs consider the proposed working group schedule and provide any feedback to the SIOFA Science Officer (marco.milardi@siofa.org) with any comments by 30 September 2022.

I also note that proposed agendas for these workshops will follow shortly.

I hope that this circular will assist in your planning and preparation for the upcoming scientific meetings.

Sincerely yours,



Alistair Dunn – SIOFA Scientific Committee Chair

Table 1: 2022/23 SIOFA Scientific Committee workshop schedule

Workshop	Summary Title	WS Chair(s) ⁴	Format	Number of days ¹	Proposed dates ²
WS2022-SUM1	Ecosystem summaries and fisheries overview workshop ³	SC Chair	Virtual	1	Tuesday 26 th September 2022
				1	Tuesday 6 th December
WS2022-SMON1	Monitoring of alfonsino, toothfish, orange roughy	SC Chair	Virtual	3	Monday 3 rd to Wednesday 5 th October 2022
	Harvest strategies (roadmap)		Virtual		
	Biological data collection protocol		Virtual		
	Acoustic data protocol		Virtual		
	Alfonsino acoustic surveys feasibility		Virtual		
WS2022-EMON1	E-monitoring schemes	TBD	Virtual	0.5	7 rd November 2022
WS2022-BIRD1	Seabird mitigation options	TBD	Virtual	0.5	8 rd November 2022
WS2022-VME1	VME indicator species threshold development plan (WG/Consultant)	PAEWG Chair	Virtual	2	12 th December 2022
	VME management		Virtual		
	VME indicator species thresholds		Virtual		
	VME indicator species thresholds		Virtual		
WS2022-DWS1	Workshop on deepwater sharks in the SIOFA Area	TBD	Tenerife, Spain	2	Monday 21 st and Tuesday 22 nd March 2023
WS2022-HS2	Joint MoP-SC workshop on harvest strategy pre-assessment	TBD	Hybrid Tenerife, Spain	2	Friday 18 th and Saturday 19 th March 2023

Notes

1. Number of days indicate days where meetings are held. For virtual meetings, these will usually last 4.5 hours per day, with 4 hours of meeting time made up of 2 sessions of 2 hours each.
2. The Ecosystem summaries and fisheries overview workshop will require 2 days, with the second day held later to allow the Secretariat to update the draft documents.
3. Potential Workshop Chairs are indicated; however, SC HoDs may choose to recommend representatives for these roles.

Table 2: 2022/23 SIOFA Scientific Committee consultancy schedule

Consultancy	Summary Title	Funding source	Value (Euro)	Deadline for contract completion
SER2022-TOP1	Toothfish stock structure (molecular analysis)	EU grant GO1	8333	Apr-23
SER2022-ORY1	Orange roughy stock structure	EU grant GO1	8333	Apr-23
SER2022-ALF1	Alfonsino stock assessment + stock structure	EU grant GO1	33333	Apr-23
SEC2022-DBS1	Develop Data Base system and analyses	EU grant GO1.1	20000	Apr-23
PAE2021-01b	Identification of representative protected areas within SIOFA (ToR2)	EU grant GO2	10000	Apr-23
PAE2021-01c	Investigate and advise on the use of habitat suitability modelling in predicting benthic species diversity and distribution in SIOFA (ToR3)	EU grant GO2	10000	Apr-23
PAE2021-01d	Holistic framework for assessing and preventing Significant Adverse Impacts (SAIs) on VMEs (ToR4)	EU grant GO2	10000	Apr-23
PAE2021-01e	Identify and update existing and potential SAIs within the SIOFA management area (ToR5)	EU grant GO2	5000	Apr-23
SEC2022-EXP1	External expert to support PAEWG and SERAWG	EU grant GO 5	11500	Apr-23
SER2022-ALF2	Alfonsino acoustic abundance (feasibility to be confirmed by workshop)	Mop9	15000	TBD
SER2022-ALF3	Alfonsino otolith ageing + age validation using bomb radiometry	Mop9+EU grant GO1	15000	Apr-23
PAE2022-MPA1	Protocols to designate and evaluate MPAs	EU SIOFA-SEAs	18000	Jul-23
SER2022-TOP2	Toothfish population spatial structure	EU SIOFA-SEAs	34000	Jul-23
SEC2022-OBS1	Harmonization of observer framework	EU SIOFA-SEAs	48000	Jan-24
SEC2022-SC81	SC8 meeting organization	EU SIOFA-SC8	118000	Mar-23
SER2022-TOP3	Toothfish growth curve (+ otolith collection)	EU grant GO1	0	Apr-23
SER2022-ERA1	Update to the ERA work - update the teleosts ERAs with better and more recent input data	EU grant GO2	15000	Apr-23

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ANNEX 1: Requests and requirements for the Scientific Committee

1. Requests to Scientific Committee from the Meeting of Parties

84. Regarding paragraphs 174-175 of the SC7 report on the Important Marine Mammal Area (IMMA) designation process and the obtaining of shape files for the IMMA regions, the Meeting of the Parties requested the Secretariat to seek further information about the required steps for participation in the IMMA designation process and present the information to the SC8 meeting and the 10th Meeting of the Parties.

100. The Meeting of the Parties discussed the scope of the SIOFA Observer Code of Conduct that is to be developed by the SC and AGREED that it would apply to scientific observer duties and not any compliance-related duties, which would fall within the remit of the Compliance Committee.

114. The Meeting of the Parties REQUESTED that the SC work intersessionally to verify the footprint and resolve any potential discrepancies between the footprint produced by the Secretariat and the individual footprints produced by CCPs, discuss the results of the verification work at SC8, and present an updated footprint to the 10th Meeting of the Parties if necessary

126. The MoP AGREED it would be useful to develop a classification system for SC documents, as well as for other documents handled by the MoP more generally (including sensitive information or financial information) to determine how to handle documents of a more sensitive nature. However, the MoP also AGREED it was premature to determine which types of information or data would need to have restricted or confidential handling without advice from the SC.

127. Accordingly, the MoP AGREED to seek the following advice from the SC:

- 1) Is the current definition of 'public domain data' and 'public domain catch and effort data' appropriate for public information, or could it be reduced to a finer scale (eg 1x1 degrees providing it is not possible to identify a single set)?
- 2) Is there merit in displaying finer levels of stratification, economic information with different controls – for example, different limitations on who can access papers that display finer scale data, where it is publicised or where it is discussed (open/closed sessions). What would the appropriate classifications be in this regard? E.g.

Classification	Type of information or data	Access	Website access	Display in open or closed session?
<i>Tier 1: Public</i>	<i>Public domain data / public domain catch and effort data as defined in CMM 2016-03 Country-level economic information</i>	<i>Open access</i>	<i>Publicly available on SIOFA website</i>	<i>Open session</i>
<i>Tier 2: Restricted</i>	<i>1x1 degrees and does not identify a single fishing event;</i>	<i>CCPs? CCPs + Observers? External scientists under conditions?</i>	<i>Publicly available on SIOFA website? Restricted section of SIOFA website</i>	

3) Can economic information at the country-level be displayed provided it doesn't identify an individual company or other proprietary information?

4) What does the SC need to do with finer-scale data displayed in its Working Papers and Information Papers?

5) What problems, if any, has the SC or its observers encountered in terms of accessing SC papers or in the presentation and display of data in its papers?

139. The Meeting of the Parties AGREED to hold the next orange roughy stock assessment in three years' time. With regard to the Long Eastern Ridge, the Meeting of the Parties agreed that the assessment should provide advice on whether and to what level fishing activity should be constrained, and whether catch and/or effort should be constrained.

167. The Meeting of the Parties AGREED to incorporate the discussions of the SERAWG and the PAEWG into a combined and extended meeting of the SC in 2023 on a trial basis. The Meeting of the Parties REQUESTED the SC to assess this alternative arrangement for organising its meetings, consider whether this or any other alternative arrangements without formal working groups may work more efficiently than the existing arrangement, and provide advice to the next Meeting of the Parties.

268. The Meeting of the Parties AGREED that the joint MoP-SC workshop on harvest strategy pre-assessment will take place from 17 to 18 March 2023, the workshop on deepwater sharks in the SIOFA Area will take place from 20 to 21 March 2023, and the eighth meeting of the SC will take place from 22 to 31 March 2023, in Tenerife, Spain.

2. Summary of tasks following SC7

Agenda item 3.1. Discussion and questions for each CCP annual national report

33. The SC RECOMMENDED that the Meeting of the Parties (MoP) task the Secretariat with developing an updated template for annual national reports in consultation with CCPs.

Agenda item 3.2 Draft overview of SIOFA fisheries

38. The SC held further discussions on the importance of including catch and effort data for the most recent year in the overview but recognised practical difficulties that need to be resolved before this can be achieved. The SC NOTED that while CCPs are requested to report total catch (in kg) for each species in the SIOFA Area, the ratio of catch by species for each subarea can be provided in national reports, as allowed for in the guidelines (Annex F: Guidelines for Submission of National Reports in the report of SC02, 2017). The SC REQUESTED the Secretariat update the Guidelines for Submission of National Reports to request CCPs report the catch (in kg) of individual species caught in the most recent year for each subarea provided it does not conflict with data confidentiality or commercial sensitivity requirements, as it relates to the application of relevant national legislation.

42. The SC RECOMMENDED that the allocation of information presented between the Overview of SIOFA fisheries, and the fishery and ecosystem summary reports should be considered at its next meeting.

Agenda item 3.3 Fisheries Summaries (Project SEC2021-07)

43. The SC ENDORSED the SERAWG's request that the Secretariat and the SC Chair work in consultation with CCPs over the intersessional period to further develop the fishery report template and present draft fisheries summaries at SERAWG5, with particular emphasis on toothfish, alfonsino, orange roughy, oilfish (*Ruvettus pretiosus* (OIL) and *Lepidocybium flavobrunneum* (LEC)), *Nemadactylus macropterus* (TAK), *Polyprion americanus* (WRF) and *Polyprion oxygeneios* (WHA).

44. The SC ENDORSED the Protected Areas and Ecosystems Working Group's (PAEWG's) request that the Secretariat and the SC Chair work in consultation with CCPs over the intersessional period to further develop the ecosystem report template and present a draft ecosystem summary at PAEWG5.

Agenda item 3.4. Data Access and Dissemination (Projects SEC2021-05 & SEC2021-06)

The SC discussed the report [SC-07-08] and:

- NOTED that the consultant had highlighted discrepancies regarding public domain data within CMM 2016/03, particularly paragraph 2c.
- RECOMMENDED that the MoP could consider revising CMM 2016/03, particularly paragraph 2, to provide clarification on the definition of public domain data.

- RECOMMENDED that the MoP consider providing documentation and guidelines on how CMM 2016/03 should be operationalised, including the implementation of standard operating procedures for data use and data requests provided in SC-07-08.
- RECOMMENDED that the MoP task the SC Chair to work intersessionally with CCPs to prepare a paper for SC8 that would clarify and provide operational processes for the use and presentation of data within meetings and include case studies from other RFMOs.
- RECOMMENDED the development of a separate document for the technical instructions for collection requirements of catch and effort data and observer data, which could be cross-referenced in CMM 2021/02 (Data Standards), and NOTED that this would allow greater agility in the development of detailed instructions for data collection without the need for the CMM to be revised by MoP.
- RECOMMENDED that the MoP task the Secretariat to conduct the following, NOTING that this may require additional resource considerations:
 - i. transition from separate 'topic-based' databases to a corporate data domain structure in which the subject areas are all housed together to provide a more robust and scalable data model for the future.
 - ii. implement consistent documentation including data naming standards, data dictionary and change registries and clear procedures for data dissemination for both database extracts and derived data products including procedure to be followed when changes are required
 - iii. provide shared documentation that provides a common understanding and expectation of data management policies and practices to all CCPs.
- RECOMMENDED that, as part of future reviews, the Secretariat create a catalogue of its unstructured data and review the management of those data and the data and content management systems, including the management and version control of meeting papers and reports.
- RECOMMENDED that any changes to data management, both for structured and unstructured data, and the security arrangements for those data are carried out in an integrated manner

61. The SC:

- REQUESTED the Secretariat develop:
 - i. a standard template for consultant reports so that they are consistent with the report format required for reports submitted to SIOFA Scientific Working Groups.
 - ii. a template for communications when circulating draft consultant reports that may contain confidential data to the appropriate CCPs for review and approval (i.e., where the report shows or presents confidential data, commercially sensitive information, or financial matters that have not been approved by SIOFA and the relevant CCPs).
 - iii. a template for communications that distribute draft consultant reports to SC HoDs that request review and including appropriate confidentiality requirements.
 - iv. a proposal for a classification system for restricted and confidential documents and regulation of access by meeting participants

Agenda item 3.5. Advice to the MoP

63. RECOMMEND the Secretariat be tasked with developing an updated template for annual national reports in consultation with CCPs.

64. The SC

- REQUESTED the Secretariat update the Guidelines for Submission of National Reports to request CCPs report retained and discarded catch (in kg) of individual species in the most recent year for each subarea where possible under national legislation and CMM requirements. Where this is not possible, the Guidelines should continue to require reporting of catch ratios.
- ENDORSE the SERAWG's request that the Secretariat and the SC Chair will work in consultation with CCPs over the intersessional period to further develop the fishery report template and present draft fisheries summaries at SERAWG5, with particular emphasis on toothfish, alfonsino, orange roughy, oilfish (*Ruvettus pretiosus* (OIL) and *Lepidocybium flavobrunneum* (LEC)), *Nemadactylus macropterus* (TAK), *Polyprion americanus* (WRF) and *Polyprion oxygeneios* (WHA).
- ENDORSE the PAEWG's request that the Secretariat and the SC Chair work in consultation with CCPs over the intersessional period to further develop the ecosystem report template and present a draft ecosystem summary at PAEWG5.
- ENDORSE the continued development of the fisheries and ecosystem summary reports by SC.

65. REQUEST the Secretariat to conduct the following, NOTING that this may require additional resource considerations:

- i. transition from separate 'topic-based' databases to a corporate data domain structure in which the subject areas are all housed together to provide a more robust and scalable data model for the future.
 - ii. implement consistent documentation including data naming standards, data dictionary and change registries and clear procedures for data dissemination for both database extracts and derived data products including procedure to be followed when changes are required.
 - iii. provide shared documentation that provides a common understanding and expectation of data management policies and practices to all CCPs.
- REQUEST that the Secretariat create a catalogue of its unstructured data and review the management of those data and the data and content management systems, including the management and version control of meeting papers and reports.
 - NOTE that any changes to data and content management systems should be carried out in an integrated manner.

66. With regard to the proposed process for assessing and distributing SC meeting documents (SC-07-31 rev. 1), the SC RECOMMENDED the MoP:

- NOTE that the SC has ADOPTED the revised procedures detailed in Annex A for the submission of documents to the SC and its working groups.
- NOTE that the SC has REQUESTED the Secretariat develop:
 - a standard template for consultant reports so that they are consistent with the report format required for reports submitted to SIOFA Scientific Working Groups.
 - a template for communications when circulating draft consultant reports that may contain confidential data to the appropriate CCPs for review and approval (i.e., where the report shows or presents confidential data, commercially sensitive information, or financial matters that have not been approved by SIOFA and the relevant CCPs).
 - a template for communications that distribute draft consultant reports to SC HoDs that request review, and including appropriate confidentiality requirements.
 - a proposal for a classification system for restricted and confidential documents and regulation of access by meeting participants.

Agenda item 7.1 Consultant report of the harvest strategies: ToR2 Roadmap (Project SER2021-05)

125. As the next steps, the SC RECOMMENDED:

- that the Secretariat work intersessionally to prepare as much information as possible for understanding the data available on the alfonsino, orange roughy and toothfish fisheries and any potential trends in the data.
- that a two-day harvest strategy pre-assessment workshop be held in 2023 prior to SC8, with the participation of scientists, managers, industry representatives, and observers, to:
 - i. discuss the planning and implementation of the harvest strategy development roadmap.
 - ii. interpret the data.
 - iii. identify data gaps for informing a stock assessment.
 - iv. discuss which stocks are to be assessed.
- that the outcomes of the workshop be presented to the SC and its working groups for further discussion.

Agenda Item 7.3 Consultant report on seabirds, mammals, and bycatch ERA (project PAE 2021-02)

142. The SC REQUESTED the SIOFA Secretariat to provide a report on lost gear under CMM 2021/02 Annex A and a report on observations of marine mammals interacting with fishing gear under CMM 2021/02 Annex B and Annex E at SC8.

Agenda Item 7.5 Definition of main species

149. The SC ENDORSED the following SERAWG recommendations:

- to note the need to hold further discussions defining fisheries and target species as this would provide clarification of bycatch species.
- to hold a half-day virtual workshop for such discussions and review the existing literature on the subject.

150. The SC RECOMMENDED that the workshop include considering biological removals as well as distinguishing between retained bycatch and discarded bycatch.

Agenda item 7.6 Review of the level of mortality of deep-water sharks

157. The SC ENDORSED the SERAWG's recommendation to support the holding of a 2-day workshop in Tenerife (Spain) in 2023 to:

- carry out an assessment of the stock status of the shark species involved in the SIOFA fisheries.
- discuss potential measures to reduce shark bycatch further.

158. The SC further RECOMMENDED that the workshop:

- investigate potential shark bycatch mitigation measures considering all fishing methods across the whole SIOFA Area.
- consider as a priority the key areas and methods for which sharks are caught.
- review the list of species of concern in CMM 2019/12 (Sharks) with respect to sharks.
- develop identification guides to assist the recording of species by the vessel crew and observers

160. The SC RECOMMENDED that a data call be made in preparation for the shark-related workshop to gather all available data.

176. With regard to defining fisheries, target species and bycatch species, the SC RECOMMENDED that the MoP:

- NOTE the need to hold further discussions defining fisheries and target species as this would provide clarification of bycatch species.
- ENDORSE the holding of a half-day virtual workshop for such discussions and review the existing literature on the subject, including considering biological removals as well as distinguishing between retained bycatch and discarded bycatch

Agenda item 10 – Bottom fishing impact assessment and bottom protected areas

198. The SC REQUESTED advice from the PAEWG on how to consolidate the advice derived from the different BFIA submitted to the PAEWG and work on VME mapping / bio-regionalisation.

Agenda item 11.1. Annual catch and effort data submission (Secretariat)

202. The SC REQUESTED the Secretariat to make the following improvements to next year's report:

- include a description of the methodology used to determine ratings.
- include explanations of how CCPs could have improved their ratings.
- present ratings on a fishery-by-fishery basis.

Agenda item 11.2. E-monitoring scheme

206. The SC ENDORSED the recommendation to agree to present summaries of the development of CCPs' electronic monitoring programs at the 2023 SC meeting as per paragraph 44 of WHSOP Report.

Agenda item 11.3. Role of scientific observers and harmonization (workshop informal notes)

211. The SC ENDORSED the recommendations to request the MoP to:

- task the SC Chair and the Secretariat to undertake intersessional discussions with CCPs on SC and MoP on a potential code of conduct that specifies Scientific Observer, CCPs, and vessel responsibilities under a SIOFA Code of Conduct, including requirements for independence, managing conflicts of interest, and health and safety considerations for Scientific Observers.
- task the SC Chair to prepare, based on the intersessional discussions, a draft paper with options for a SIOFA Scientific Observer Code of Conduct to be considered by the SC and MoP in 2023.
- task the SC Chair to prepare, based on the intersessional discussions, a draft paper with options for a SIOFA Scientific Observer Code of Conduct to be considered by the SC and MoP in 2023.

Agenda item 11.4. Review of CMM 2021/02 on Data Standards (Project SEC 2021-09)

222. With regard to the development of a SIOFA Observer Code of Conduct, the SC REQUESTED the MoP to:

- task the SC Chair and the Secretariat to undertake intersessional discussions with CCPs on SC and MoP on a potential code of conduct that specifies Scientific Observer, CCPs, and vessel responsibilities under a SIOFA Code of Conduct, including requirements for independence, managing conflicts of interest, and health and safety considerations for Scientific Observers.

Agenda item 12.4 Monaco Exploration

232. The SC REQUESTED that the Secretariat initiate the process to share with Monaco Explorations the maps and final reports produced by the consultant in Project SER2021-03, following CMM 2016/03 (Data Confidentiality) and the procedures included in the Transparency and distribution of meeting documents SC-07-31 rev. 1.