

**FINAL REPORT OF THE  
2024 INTERIM MEETING OF THE  
SCIENTIFIC COORDINATING GROUP (SCG)  
TO THE AGREEMENT TO PREVENT UNREGULATED  
HIGH SEAS FISHERIES IN THE  
CENTRAL ARCTIC OCEAN (CAOFA)**

Held virtually  
19-21 November 2024

Chairperson: Dr. John L. Bengtson

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**Agenda item 1: Call to order and introduction by the Chairperson**

1. The 2024 interim meeting of the Scientific Coordinating Group (SCG) to the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean (CAOFA) was opened and chaired by the SCG Chair John L. Bengtson of the United States. The meeting was held virtually on 19-21 November 2024.
2. The Chair welcomed participants and thanked them for their work to prepare for the interim SCG meeting.

**Agenda item 2: Welcoming remarks by the Vice-chairperson**

3. The new SCG Vice-chair, Dr. Hauke Flores (EU) welcomed meeting participants and stated that he looks forward to serving the group in the spirit of the CAOFA.

**Agenda item 3: Adoption of the agenda and appointment of rapporteurs**

4. The Chair outlined the main points of the provisional agenda and asked SCG participants if they wished to suggest any revisions. No revisions were proposed.
5. A final agenda for the 2024 interim meeting of the Scientific Coordinating Group (SCG) was adopted (CAOFA-2024-SCG interim-01) and is provided in Appendix 1. A list of the working documents presented to the SCG (CAOFA-2024-SCG interim-02) is provided in Appendix 2.
6. The SCG Vice-chair and Co-chairs of the MM-WG and DM-WG were appointed as rapporteurs to assist the SCG Chair in preparing a report of the meeting.

**Agenda item 4: Opening remarks by delegations**

7. The Heads of Delegation and representatives of observer organizations delivered opening remarks.
8. A list of participants (CAOFA-2024- SCG interim-03) is provided in Appendix 3.

9. A total of 57 persons participated online in the interim meeting of the SCG including members from all ten Parties to the Agreement and representatives of three observer organizations.
10. Consistent with the SCG's Rules of Procedure, observer status was approved prior to the meeting for the following three organizations to attend meetings of the SCG and its working groups during the 2024/2025 meeting cycle:
  - World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Arctic Programme;
  - International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES); and
  - United Kingdom.

### **Agenda item 5: Overview of SCG tasks for 2024-2025**

11. The SCG discussed the document "Draft SCG priorities and work plan: 2024-2026" (CAOFA-2024-SCG interim-02, attached as Appendix 4), which was based on the tasks that the SCG had identified at its April 2024 meeting in Boston.
12. Because several of the tasks listed in the initial draft work plan (Appendix 4) had overlapping elements, the plan was modified as follows:
  - Tasks 2,13,14,15 were merged into one task focusing on the coordination of research activities between the partners and their scientific programs;
  - Tasks 3 and 6 were merged into one task focusing on analyses needed to provide advice to the COP;
  - Tasks 4, 12, 16 were merged into one task focusing on reporting the progress of JPSRM implementation to the COP;
  - Tasks 7-11 were merged into one task focusing on exploratory fishing;
  - Tasks 17, 19-21 were merged into one task focusing on data and data management;
  - Task 18 was moved to just before Task 22; and
  - Tasks 20-31 were merged into one task.
13. Issues raised with regard to the MM-WG, DM-WG, and exploratory fishing are summarized below under agenda items 6, 7, and 9.b, respectively.
14. Additional topics regarding SCG tasks in the coming years include task numbers refer to initial draft work plan in Appendix 4:
  - Task 3 is considered of high priority. The SCG intends to draft a list of analyses needed for advice (lead: H. Flores, EU). Taxonomic drafting support from the MM-WG will be needed;
  - Task 4: The SCG needs to develop a suitable format for reports to the COP (J. Bengtson, USA);
  - Task 28: The SCG recognized that before discussing the distribution of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VME), a clear definition of VME is urgently needed. The SCG noted that there are already multiple definitions available in the scientific literature, but meeting participants noted the need for a definition tailored to the unique ecosystems of the Agreement Area and the Arctic Indigenous and local communities that rely on them. The United States (Lauren Fields) offered to develop, along with participants from other parties, a white paper of a CAOFA VME definition to be considered by the SCG at the March 2025 in-person meeting. A

thorough review process by the SCG is needed, including input from MM-WG, before a definition suitable for SCG can be evaluated. The COP EF-WG has an annex regarding VMEs that should be taken into account; and

- Task 32: the SCG will stand by for progress on an online platform as identified by the COP.

15. A revised version of the priorities and work plan, including prioritizations, is provided under agenda item 9 of this report (Table 1).

### Agenda item 6: Mapping and Monitoring Working Group (MM-WG)

16. The MM-WG met virtually on 9 October 2024 to discuss tasks assigned to the MM-WG before the spring 2025 SCG meeting. The MM-WG's top priority in the coming months before the March 2025 SCG meeting is to work on refining the four draft standard methods for data collection in the Joint Program of Scientific Research and Monitoring (JPSRM), which were attached as appendices to the Report of the Second Meeting of the SCG, 2024.
17. Discussions focused on forming writing teams to complete these tasks. Writing teams were asked to prepare draft documents by mid-December that would then be shared with the full MM-WG for comments in January 2025, providing time for subsequent revisions before the spring 2025 SCG meeting. A goal should be to harmonize the JPSRM methods with those already being used and applied effectively. Where feasible, the drafting teams should consider building the JPSRM standard methods on previously drafted methods developed by other groups in the past (e.g., CCAMLR<sup>1</sup>, ICES<sup>2</sup>, PICES<sup>3</sup>). The current composition of writing team members includes:
  - Standard Methods – Fish species – EU (Flores, Snoeijls-leijonmalm), USA (Logerwell), [Norway], Iceland, China (Ying, Hai Li), Canada (Hedges, Westfall, Rooper);
  - Standard Methods – Marine mammal and seabird species – Canada, USA (Bengtson, Berchok), [Greenland], Iceland;
  - Standard Methods – Other taxa from key trophic levels – China (Zhiqiang Xu), USA, Canada, EU; and
  - Standard Methods – Ecological linkages and impacts (predator-prey interactions, trophic dynamics, climate, environment) – EU, China (Hui Lin, Haiyan Jin), Japan (Nishino), Canada (Hedges).
18. The MM-WG's next highest temporal priority is to coordinate a meeting(s) bringing parties together to promote and collaborate with program and vessel managers (as described in tasks numbered #1, #2, #14, #15 the original work plan, Appendix 4). The SCG noted that moving forward with this type of coordination will be difficult in the absence and without the assistance of a formal CAOFA Secretariat. Co-chair Hedges suggested convening three different meetings with regionally relevant partners in European, North American, and Asian time zones to facilitate participation by science and vessel managers from all Parties. Producing information and outreach material (e.g. brochures, website content) should be discussed at the SCG's next meeting in March 2025.

<sup>1</sup> Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)

<sup>2</sup> International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

<sup>3</sup> North Pacific Marine Research Organization (PICES)

Task No.	Temporal priority	Task description	SCG2 report paragraphs	SCG Group	To be completed before March 2025 SCG3 meeting		Before 2026 SCG4 meeting
					Team leaders & members ( <i>Who</i> )	Product ( <i>What</i> )	Team leaders & product ( <i>Who &amp; What</i> )
1	HI	<b><u>FURTHER DEVELOP THE FOUR JPSRM STANDARD METHODS DOCUMENTS:</u></b> To facilitate consistent development of JPSRM data collection (by March 2025).	23	MM	MM-WG Standard Methods groups	Revised Standard Methods	
2	HI	<b><u>IDENTIFY A LIST OF ANALYSES NEEDED TO DEVELOP RELIABLE ADVICE TO THE COP TO:</u></b> a. Provide advice to the COP regarding species distributions and abundance in JPSRM priority areas; b. Assess ecological linkages among species; and c. Forecast potential changes in CAO ecosystems that would affect resource availability.		MM	Ask Standard Methods groups to indicate what specific data will be needed		
3	HI	<b><u>REPORT TO THE COP ON JPSRM IMPLEMENTATION, INCLUDING:</u></b> a. Progress on developing information products as described in JPSRM Implementation Plan Section 10.3; and b. Effective science planning, vessel coordination, and integration of scientific information and Indigenous Knowledge.		SCG, MM-WG, DM-WG	Co-chairs of SCG, MM-WG, and DM-WG	MM-WG and DM-WG prepare a report for SCG meetings (perhaps as appendices to SCG reports) for review by SCG and submission to COP	
4	HI	<b><u>COLLABORATION WITH GROUPS EXTERNAL TO THE SCG AND JPSRM:</u></b> Noting the importance of collaborating with international science programs to support the JPSRM, <b>SCG members will identify individuals from within the SCG membership with current membership in International bodies</b> to initiate and report back on engagement/collaboration opportunities.	60	SCG	SCG Chair and Vice-chair	Report back to SCG	
5	HI	<b><u>IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNICATING AND COLLABORATING WITH HOLDERS OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE:</u></b> SCG members will identify opportunities for communicating among national research programs and collaborating with Indigenous Knowledge holders and local knowledge holders	59	SCG	Links to discussions in SCG and WGs	For example, SCG members may highlight their existing research programs and invite SCG participants to join projects	First step is to identify entities with various types of information, then clarify actions that would be appropriate
6	MED	<b><u>CONVENE A MEETING OF SCG MEMBERS AND MANAGERS OF NATIONAL ARCTIC PROGRAMS TO DEVELOP PROCESSES AND TIMELINES FOR:</u></b> a. Scheduling vessels for joint expeditions into the JPSRM study area; b. Organizing teams of scientists, Indigenous Knowledge holders, and local experts to plan and conduct joint research; c. Facilitating collaboration in meeting the data needs identified in the JPSRM Framework and the JPSRM Implementation Plan; d. Establishing annual meetings of SCG Members and program managers with Arctic research vessels to discuss planning and coordination of research cruises; and e. Beginning to design a process to discuss collaborative research planning for 2025.		MM	[defer to after March 2025]	[defer to after March 2025]	

## Report of the 2024 Interim Meeting of the CAOFA Scientific Coordinating Group

Task No.	Priority	Task description	SCG2 report paragraphs	SCG Group	To be completed before <b>March 2025 SCG3 meeting</b>		<b>Before 2026 SCG4 meeting</b>
					Team leaders & members ( <i>Who</i> )	Product ( <i>What</i> )	Team leaders & product ( <i>Who/What</i> )
7	HI	<b><u>TASKS FOR DATA MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP:</u></b> <i>a. Re-establish the participant list from each SCG Member</i> with a focus on only one or two people per Party to manage the meetings that focus on technical aspects of data management [in November/December];	47.a	DM	DM-WG Co-chairs	DM-WG participant list	
		<i>b. Identify data and information to be made available on the Agreement website</i> (public). The SCG also discussed adding data to the secure portion of the portal to assess the sharing of existing national datasets (to be conducted in coordination with COP website WG -- next meeting on 15 January, SCG members welcome to join meeting); and	47.d	DM		Identify web content	
	MED	<i>c. Establish the Data Management Team and review the Terms of Reference</i> to address any gaps in guidance for operationalizing the DMSP; and	47.c	DM	DM-WG Co-chairs	[defer to after March 2025]	
		<i>d. Develop Standard Operating Procedure</i> to collate Data Sharing Protocol requirements that include core metadata standards (and include evaluation of external data) and collect and share metadata for other (National) scientific data relevant to JPSRM.	47.e, 47.f	DM		[defer to after March 2025]	
8	MED	<b><u>CONVENE A MEETING OF THE DM-WG TO ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING FOUR TASKS:</u></b> <i>a. Discuss bringing together all relevant knowledge systems</i> under the JPSRM	49.a	DM		[defer to after March 2025]	
		<i>b. Develop processes and procedures for incorporating Indigenous Knowledge and local knowledge into the JPSRM database.</i> The SCG should review guidelines and procedures regarding consultation, acquisition, and ownership of Indigenous Knowledge consistent with Section 6.2 of the JPSRM Implementation Plan and the DMSP with the intent that these guidelines and procedures be periodically reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure they remain up to date and culturally appropriate,	49.b	DM		[defer to after March 2025]	
		<i>c. Report to the COP with recommendations regarding Section 7.3: Involving Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledge in the JPSRM.</i> Report will include recommendations for guidelines and procedures regarding consultation, acquisition, and ownership of Indigenous Knowledge, and procedures for incorporating Indigenous Knowledge into the JPSRM database, methods, and analysis	49.c	DM		[defer to after March 2025]	
	MED	<i>d. Develop a process to ensure the accuracy and authority of unpublished evaluations results;</i> all data and reports used by the JPSRM shall adhere to DMSP standards and processes, and be peer-reviewed and published.	49.d	DM		[defer to after March 2025]	
9	MED	<b><u>MAP THE ADOPTED JPSRM AND EF DATA TYPES AND STANDARD METHODS TO CURRENT DM PROTOCOLS IN THE DMSP</u></b> The SCG discussed the need for the DM-WG to work with the MM-WG to make sure there is not overlap in effort: first step may be to start listing existing data sets of relevance to JPSRM (in time for SCG 2025/26 meetings <u>after March 2025</u> ).	47.b	DM	DM-WG and MM-WG Co-chairs	Preliminary discussions among MM-WG and DM-WG in connection with DM-WG meetings in January and March 2025	Pending progress in finishing the Standard Methods; then proceed to discussions between MM-WG and DM-WG

Report of the 2024 Interim Meeting of the CAOFA Scientific Coordinating Group

Task No.	Priority	Task description	SCG2 report paragraphs	SCG Group	To be completed before March 2025 SCG3 meeting		Before 2026 SCG4 meeting
					Team leaders & members ( <i>Who</i> )	Product ( <i>What</i> )	Team leaders & product ( <i>Who/What</i> )
10	HI	<p><b><u>UNDERSTANDING VULNERABLE MARINE ECOSYSTEM (VME) HABITATS, RELATED SPECIES, AND THEIR DISTRIBUTIONS:</u></b>                      Inform spatial and temporal restrictions under CMMs for exploratory fishing, sensitivity to different types of fishing/sampling gear, and development of encounter protocols or move-on provisions. This topic needs to be considered in connection with discussions being undertaken by EF-WG and within SCG. Therefore, this task can be addressed both prior to and after the SCG's March 2025 meeting.]</p>	57.a	SCG	U.S. Delegation offered to undertake this task and prepare a summary of VME definitions and report to the SCG for its consideration at its March 2025 meeting. All members are encouraged to contact U.S. Delegation with ideas and contributions.	Given that "VME" is used by several groups and literature, it would be useful to review the EF-WG work that is underway and work by others (literature, especially other work in high latitude areas) by preparing a short white paper to assist the SCG in confirming how it defines VME.	Link to EF WG process meeting above and MM-WG actions
11	MED	<p><b><u>REVIEW EXPLORATORY FISHING BY:</u></b>                      a. Creating a new SCG working group to review exploratory fishing plans;                      b. Providing advice to the SCG on minimum scientific requirements of exploratory fishing plans;                      c. Developing a process and procedures to facilitate the provision of comments and feedback on any exploratory fishing plans;                      d. Identifying opportunities for coordination among exploratory fishing plans to include Indigenous Knowledge, minimize duplication, maximize the scientific value of exploratory fishing data collection, and minimize the ecosystem impacts of exploratory fishing; and                      e. Ensuring data collected during exploratory fishing and subsequently provided to the Data Management Team meet standards established by the JPSRM Data Management and Sharing Protocol.</p>		SCG	[defer to after March 2025]	[defer to after March 2025]	
12	MED	<p><b><u>IDENTIFYING ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORMS:</u></b>                      The SCG tasks itself and the DM-WG with identifying an online communications platform that is accessible to all SCG Members that can be used for online editing/revisions. Noting that the COP's WEB-WG is reviewing needs and options for communications, the SCG will maintain this task on our agenda, but will defer immediate action pending progress by WEB-WG.</p>	62.a	SCG, DM	[mostly defer to after March 2025]	[mostly defer to after March 2025]	Progress on this task will be undertaken after SCG March 2025 meeting as website capabilities become clearer
13	HI	<p><b><u>SOLICIT AN INVITATION FROM A SCG MEMBER TO HOST AN IN-PERSON MEETING IN 2025:</u></b> Note that 28 January 2025 is the deadline for submitting documents in advance of the SCG March 2025 meeting</p>	55	SCG	SCG Chair	Iceland has invited SCG to hold its March 2025 meeting in Iceland	Explore possible hosts for SCG in-person meeting in 2026



19. The SCG noted that: a) awareness for CAOFA needs to be raised in the science managers of the parties in order to enable JPSRM research; b) SCG needs to gather logistic information, timelines, and ship time planning; and c) China is planning a comprehensive survey in the CAO that could be utilized for the JPSRM.
20. As feasible, the following actions should be addressed:
  - Meeting dates of MM-WG in 2026 : October, interim SCG, January for draft appendices;
  - Appendices of draft standard methods finished by end of 2024 (writing team);
  - Holding a MM-WG meeting in January 2025 to discuss drafts (all (WG members); and
  - Prepare discussions of tools suitable for outreach to relevant entities for research collaboration for March 2025 meeting.
21. The revised SCG priorities and work plan provides additional details on MM-WG objectives and timing for 2024-2026 (Table 1).

### **Agenda item 7: Data Management Working Group (DM-WG)**

22. Bob Foy (USA) circulated a document (CAOFA-2024-SCG interim-05) summarizing the progress of the DM-WG in 2024 (attached as Appendix 5), covering agenda items 7.a. – 7.d.
23. The DM-WG will focus on defining how data are processed and shared, not actively managing the data. The DM-WG will undertake to develop standard operating procedures (“SOP”) referring to procedures to collect data and metadata.
24. A procedure is needed to collect data from data holders providing to the JPSRM.
25. The SCG notes that resources (staff, computers and software) are needed for data management. Without these resources, the DM-WG can only provide rules and standards and leave the responsibility to data providers to apply them and make data available for the JPSRM.
26. Dr. Flores (EU) suggested to motivate relevant data holders to tag JPSRM relevant datasets, publish them at a globally accessible data center. Public data can be easily tracked by the DM-WG based on their digital object identifier (doi).
27. As feasible, the following actions should be addressed:
  - Convene meeting to combine all relevant knowledge systems under the JPSRM (12/2024 – 01/2025);
  - Draft data SOPs (March 2025);
  - Report to COP with recommendations regarding section 7.3 of the JPSRM implementation plan (June 2025);
  - Create process to ensure accuracy and authority of unpublished evaluation results (June 2025); and
  - DM-WG meeting dates: January 2025, February 2025, March 2025.
28. The revised SCG priorities and work plan provides additional details on DM-WG objectives and timing for 2024-2026 (Table 1).

**Agenda Item 8: Priority tasks to be addressed prior to the March 2025 SCG meeting**Venue and arrangements for next SCG meeting

29. On behalf of the Iceland Delegation, Dr. Bárðarson (Iceland) kindly invited the SCG to hold their next meeting in March 2025 in Iceland, at the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute. This invitation was gratefully accepted by the SCG, which looks forward to gathering in Iceland. The Chair will work with the local hosts in Iceland to coordinate logistic arrangements and details for the March 2025 SCG meeting.
30. China informed the SCG that the Chinese Delegation is considering offering to host a meeting of the SCG in China in March or April of 2026. The Chair thanked the Chinese Delegation for this very welcome news and he stated that he looked forward to the possibility of receiving a formal invitation from China to host a meeting of the SCG in 2026.

Appointment of a second Co-chair for MM-WG

31. Recognizing that the MM-WG has been operating for more than one year without a Co-chair to help share responsibility for leading the working group with Dr. Hedges (Canada), the SCG was pleased to accept an offer from Dr. Hauke Flores (EU) to serve as acting Co-chair of the MM-WG until such time as someone is able to assume that role in a permanent capacity.

SCG communications, document sharing, and document distribution

32. The SCG noted that communication within the group is largely limited to e-mails. A shared, web-based platform would be very helpful, but it has been difficult to find one that enables equal access to all parties. This issue is being addressed at present by the COP's website working group.
33. The SCG appreciates the website working group's efforts to find and implement solutions that will help to alleviate this problem and improve the efficiency of the SCG's work.
34. Vernae Angnaboogok (USA) noted that the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) is very active in PAME and Arctic Council. She emphasized the need for the SCG to carefully navigate collaborations with external organizations. She noted that engagement processes are different for Arctic Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledge in the Arctic Council and the CAOFA. She pointed out that, like the SCG is limited in funding and capacity, ICC experiences a lack of funding and capacity to be meaningfully engaged in implementing projects and initiatives. She stressed the importance of effective communication to facilitate efficient and timely sharing of information and underscored the need to work strategically to avoid the duplication of efforts.

Collaboration with international science programs in support of the JPSRM

35. The SCG acknowledged that collaboration with national and international science programs is essential to achieve the goals of the JPSRM. As described in the JPSRM Framework and Implementation Plan documents, there are many potential scientific groups and initiatives that share mutual goals with the JPSRM. Several of these groups have expressed interest informally in collaborating with the JPSRM, including CAFF's<sup>4</sup> Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program

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<sup>4</sup> Arctic Council's working group on Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)

(CBMP), the ICES/PICES/PAME Working Group for the Integrated Ecosystem Assessment of the Central Arctic Ocean (WGICA)<sup>5</sup>, Pacific Arctic Group, and PAME's expert group on Arctic Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM). Additional examples include using international efforts such as Ocean Decade, the International Polar Year (IPY), and others. The JPSRM Framework and Implementation Plan documents list many examples of groups that may be in a position to develop very constructive collaborations in support of the JPSRM.

36. A workshop to be held in December 2024 is being organized by Norway, in association with the Norwegian Chairship of the Arctic Council, to explore how science and management groups might work together to increase collaboration between groups needing information to inform ecosystem-based management (EBM) decisions – both management groups (i.e., governance of living marine resource issues) and those groups that produce such information (i.e., scientific knowledge and Indigenous Knowledge). As feasible, the SCG Chair and Vice-chair are hoping to participate in the workshop and will report back to the SCG at its meeting in March 2025.

### **Agenda Item 9: Future work of the SCG**

#### Summary of 2024/2026 SCG products, work plan, and schedule

37. Table 1 presents a summary of the products and work plan currently envisioned by the SCG for its work over the remainder of 2024 and into JPSRM. This table is prioritized based on the relative urgency of tasks as well as the practical temporal constraints on what can still be accomplished in 2024 and early 2025 prior to the SCG's in-person meeting in March 2025.
38. The SCG intends to be able to further refine this work plan by clearly describing the following during its March 2025 meeting:
- specific tasks or products;
  - assignments of who will be working on which tasks;
  - a timetable for completion of tasks; and
  - a clear calendar of the dates when the SCG, the MM-WG, and the DM-WG will be meeting during 2025 and 2026 to evaluate progress in the advancement of their groups' work.
39. Planning ahead in this manner should help the SCG and its working groups to effectively plan and continue their work throughout the year on an ongoing basis rather than experiencing lapses in communication and work between meetings.

#### Proposed new working group to review exploratory fishing plans

40. With regard to exploratory fishing in the Agreement Area, the SCG awaits guidance from the COP regarding the specific role in reviewing exploratory fishing plans as envisioned in the report of the COP3 meeting.

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<sup>5</sup> International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), Arctic Council's working group on the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)

41. The SCG recognizes that it should continue to provide the COP with input on potential terms of reference for a potential exploratory fishing group (EF-WG). Therefore, the topic of an EF-WG shall be discussed in more detail in the March 2025 meeting.
42. Dr. Glubakov (Russia) emphasized the important role that exploratory fishing can play for collecting basic scientific data that can be used to inform future management decisions.
43. The SCG noted that it would be helpful to draft a white paper describing aspects of the SCG's potential role in regard to exploratory fishing. Several delegations expressed interest in helping to prepare a draft paper on this topic for discussion by the SCG: China, USA, WWF, Canada, EU. The Chair will send out a letter seeking participants and a leader for this effort.
44. As noted in Task 10 in the SCG work plan (Table 1), it is important for the COP and SCG to have an agreed definition of the meaning of "Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VME)". The SCG will include a discussion of this topic on the agenda of its March 2025 meeting.

#### Inuit Circumpolar Council presentation on Indigenous Knowledge

45. The Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) requested 2-3 hours of time on the SCG's agenda at its March 2025 to make a presentation on Indigenous Knowledge. The goal is to show how scientific knowledge and Indigenous Knowledge in combination can lead to better ecological understanding and management advice rather than utilizing each knowledge system independently.
46. The use of different types of knowledge can strengthen the JPSRM's ecosystem approach to gaining ecological knowledge and facilitating effective management. The SCG can help support this process by raising awareness in national programs and coordinated efforts of the value to CAOFA goals made possible by utilizing information from a variety of sources.

#### **Agenda item 10: Other business**

47. The SCG was reminded that Members who wish to circulate material or documents for consideration at the SCG's in-person meeting in March 2025 should provide electronic versions of these to the Chairperson at least thirty-five calendar days prior to the SCG meeting. The Chair shall subsequently make the material and documents for the SCG meeting available to all SCG Members and observers at least thirty calendar days in advance of the meeting.
48. To help raise the profile of current and recent scientific activities relevant to the JPSRM, the SCG welcomed the proposal to include an agenda item for reporting scientific activities at all future SCG meetings.

#### **Agenda item 11: Report of the meeting**

49. Because of time constraints, it was not possible to prepare and adopt a meeting report prior the adjournment. Therefore, the SCG Chair and rapporteurs will prepare a draft report including the meeting's main points of discussion.

50. The draft report will be distributed to meeting participants for review and comment, and will be adopted by correspondence.

### **Agenda item 12: Meeting closure**

51. In closing the 2024 interim meeting of the SCG, the Chair thanked all meeting participants for their contributions and willingness to work together on the important issues addressed in this meeting.
52. The Chair offered special thanks to the SCG's Vice-chair and working group Co-chairs for serving as the meeting's rapporteurs.
53. On behalf of the SCG, the Vice-chair extended thanks to Chair John Bengtson for leading the SCG through a successful meeting.
54. The Interim Meeting of the CAOFA Scientific Coordinating Group was adjourned on 21 November 2024.

**INTERIM MEETING OF THE  
SCIENTIFIC COORDINATING GROUP (SCG) TO THE  
AGREEMENT TO PREVENT UNREGULATED HIGH SEAS FISHERIES  
IN THE CENTRAL ARCTIC OCEAN (CAOFA)**

19-21 November 2024

Held virtually

Chairperson: Dr. John L. Bengtson

**FINAL AGENDA**

1. Call to order and introduction by Chairperson
2. Welcoming remarks by Vice-Chairperson
3. Adoption of agenda and appointment of rapporteurs
4. Opening remarks by delegations
5. Overview of SCG tasks for 2024-2025
  - a. Action items adopted by the SCG at its second in-person meeting (April 2024)
  - b. Setting task priorities and developing work plans
6. Mapping and Monitoring Working Group (MM-WG)
  - a. Interim progress report of MM-WG
  - b. Priority tasks to be addressed prior to next SCG in-person meeting (March 2025)
  - c. Products, work plan (including personnel assignments), and schedule
  - d. MM-WG meeting dates in 2024-2026
7. Data Management Working Group (DM-WG)
  - a. Interim progress report of DM-WG
  - b. Priority tasks to be addressed prior to next SCG in-person meeting (March 2025)
  - c. Products, work plan (including personnel assignments), and schedule
  - d. DM-WG meeting dates in 2024-2026
8. Priority SCG tasks to be addressed prior to next SCG in-person meeting (March 2025)
  - a. Venue and arrangements for the next SCG in-person meeting: SCG3 – 4-7 March 2025
  - b. Appointment of a second Co-Chair for the MM-WG
  - c. SCG communications, document sharing, and document distribution
  - d. SCG collaboration with international science programs in support of the JPSRM
9. Future work of the SCG
  - a. Summary of 2024/26 SCG products, work plan (including personnel assignments), and schedule
  - b. Proposed new working group to review exploratory fishing plans
  - c. Inuit Circumpolar Council presentation at SCG3 regarding Indigenous Knowledge
  - d. Provisional SCG recommendations to the COP (to be finalized at SCG3 in March 2025)
10. Other business
11. Report of meeting
12. Meeting closure

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS (CAOFA-2024-SCG interim-02)  
 CAOFA- 2024-SCG interim meeting**

CAOFA-2024-SCG interim-01	Final provisional agenda
CAOFA-2024-SCG interim-02	List of documents
CAOFA-2024-SCG interim-03	List of participants
CAOFA-2024-SCG interim-04	Draft SCG work plan for 2024-2026
CAOFA-2024-SCG interim-05	Data Management Working Group update (Nov. 2024)

## Appendix 3. Report of the 2024 Interim Meeting of the CAOFA SCG

List of Participants: SCG 2024 Interim Meeting -- 19-21 November 2024									
Country	Participant name	Institutional title/ position	Institutional affiliation (with postal address)	Email address	"Head of Delegation" for the 2024 SCG Interim meeting?	CAOFA "Science Point of Contact"?	Other CAOFA designation (e.g., "Signatory Point of Contact," "Head of Delegation")?	Mapping/ Monitoring Working Group?	Data Management Working Group?
Canada	Kevin Hedges	Research Scientist	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 501 University Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R3T2N6	kevin.hedges@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	Yes	Yes	MM-WG Co-chair	Yes	No
Canada	Monika Pucko	Biologist	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 501 University Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R3T2N6	monika.pucko@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	No	No	No	Yes	No
Canada	Steven Ferguson	Research Scientist	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 501 University Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R3T2N6	steve.ferguson@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	No	No	No	Yes	No
Canada	Alain Dupuis	Science Advisor	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 501 University Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R3T2N6	alain.dupuis@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Canada	Mary Thiess	Science Advisor	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 200 Kent St, Ottawa, ON, Canada, K1A 0E6	mary.thiess@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	No	No	No	No	No
Canada	Marjolaine Blais	Biologist	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 850 route de la mer, Mont-Joli, G5H3Z4		No	No	No	Yes	No
Canada	Herb Nakimayak	Vice-president	Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada	hnakimayak@inuitcircmpolar.com	No	No	No	Yes	?
Canada	Benjamin McTaggart	Policy Advisor	Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada, 75 Albert Street, Suite 1001, Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7, Canada	bmctaggart@inuitcircmpolar.com	No	No	No	No	No
Canada	Rachel DeJong	Science Advisor	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Gulf Fisheries Centre, 343 Université Ave. P.O. Box 5030, Moncton, NB E1C 9B6	rachel.dejong@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	No	Yes	no	yes	yes
Canada	Chris Rooper	Research Scientist	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Pacific Biological Station, 3190 Hammond Bay Road, Nanaimo BC V9T 6N7, Canada	chris.rooper@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	No	No	No	No	No
Canada	Robert Apro	Senior Policy Advisor	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 200 Kent St, Ottawa, ON, Canada, K1A 0E6	robert.apro@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	No	No		No	yes
Canada	Mollie Anderson	Advisor	Oceans North	manderson@oceansnorth.ca	no	no	no		no
China	Hai LI	Associate Researcher	Third Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Natural Resources (No. 178, Daxue Road, Xiamen, China)	lihai@tio.org.cn	No	No	No	Yes	No



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China	Yiping Ying	Associate Researcher	Yellow Sea Fisheries Research Institute, CAFS (106 Nanjing Road, Qingdao, China)	yingyp@ysfri.ac.cn	No	No	No	Yes	No
China	Xinliang Wang	Principal investigator	Yellow Sea Fisheries Research Institute, CAFS (106 Nanjing Road, Qingdao, China)	wangxl@ysfri.ac.cn	No	No	No	No	Yes
China	Jichang Zhang	Assistant Researcher	Yellow Sea Fisheries Research Institute, CAFS (106 Nanjing Road, Qingdao, China)	zhangjc@ysfri.ac.cn	No	No	No	No	No
China	Zhiqiang Xu	Associate Researcher	Institute of Oceanology, Chinese Academy of Sciences	xuzhq@qdio.ac.cn	No	No	No	Yes	No
China	Yuyan Li	Assistant Researcher	East China Sea Fisheries Research Institute, Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences. 300 Jungong Road, Shanghai, China	liyuyan@ecsf.ac.cn	No	No	No	No	No
China	Lizong WU	Associate Researcher	Polar Research Institute of China (No. 1000, Xuelong Road, Pudong New District, Shanghai 201209, China)	wulizong@pric.org.cn	No	No	DM-WG Co-chair	No	Yes
China	Meng CUI	Postdoctoral Researcher	Polar Research Institute of China (No. 1000, Xuelong Road, Pudong New District, Shanghai 201209, China)	cuiheng4227@163.com	No	No	No	No	Yes
China	Yong YU	Researcher	Polar Research Institute of China (No. 1000, Xuelong Road, Pudong New District, Shanghai 201209, China)	yuyong@pric.org.cn	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
China	Hui LIN	Assistant Researcher	Polar Research Institute of China (No. 1000, Xuelong Road, Pudong New District, Shanghai 201209, China)	linhui@pric.org.cn	No	No	No	Yes	No
China	Musheng LAN	Senior Engineer	Polar Research Institute of China (No. 1000, Xuelong Road, Pudong New District, Shanghai 201209, China)	Lanmusheng@pric.org.cn	No	No	No	Yes	No
China	Yanyan SHAN	Associate Researcher	Polar Research Institute of China (No. 1000, Xuelong Road, Pudong New District, Shanghai 201209, China)	Shanyanyan@pric.org.cn	No	No	No	Yes	No
China	Yongjun Tian	Professor	Ocean University of China (Yushan Road 5, Shinan-qu, Qingdao 266003, China)	yjtian@ouc.edu.cn	No	No	No	Yes	No
Greenland/DFG	Birgitte Jacobsen	Chief Advisor	Government of Greenland	bija@nanoq.gl	Yes	No	COP HoD	No	No
Greenland/DFG	Kuluk Lyberth	Marine Governance Policy Advisor	ICC Greenland	kuluk@inuit.org	No	No	No	No	No
Iceland	Birkir Bardarson	Fisheries Biologist	Marine & Freshwater Research Institute, Fornubudum 5, 220 Hafnarfjörður, Iceland	birkir.bardarson@hafogvatn.is	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Japan	Yutaka HIROE	Principal Research Coordinator	Fisheries Agency of Japan, 1-2-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8907, JAPAN	yutaka_hiroe540@maff.go.jp	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Japan	Shigeto Nishino	Senior researcher	JAMSTEC, 2-15 Natsushima, Yokosuka, Kanagawa 237-0061, Japan	nishinos@jamstec.go.jp	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Korea	Jeongseok Park	senior scientist	National Institute of Fisheries Science	jeongseokpark@korea.kr	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Korea	Hyoung Chul Shin	President	Korea Polar Research Institute	hcshin@kopri.re.kr	No	Yes	No	No	No
Korea	Hyoung Sul La	Principal Research Scientist	Korea Polar Research Institute	hsla@kopri.re.kr	No	No	No	Yes	No

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Korea	Sangdeok Chung	Scientist	National Institute of Fisheries Science	sdchung@korea.kr	No	No	No	No	Yes
Norway	Randi B. Ingvaldsen	senior scientist	Institute of Marine Research, Box 1870, N5817 Nordnes, Norway	randi.ingvaldsen@hi.no	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Norway	Benjamin Planque	senior scientist	Institute of Marine Research, Tromsø, Norway	benjamin.planque@hi.no	No	No	No	No	Yes
Norway	Alf Håkon Hoel	senior scientist	Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø, Norway	alf.hakon.hoel@uit.no	No	Yes	No	No	No
Norway	Åge Høines	senior scientist	Institute of Marine Research, Box 1870, N5817 Nordnes, Norway	aage.hoines@hi.no	No	Yes	No	No	No
Russia	Alexander Glubokov	Head of Department	All Russian Research Institute for Fisheries and Oceanography	glubokov@vniro.ru	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Russia	Konstantin Sokolov	Deputy head	Russian Fed. Research Inst. of Fisheries and Oceanography (FSBSI "VNIRO"), Polar Branch, 6 Akademika Knipovicha St., 183038, Murmansk	sokolkm@pinro.vniro.ru	No	Yes	No	No	No
Russia	Andrey Dolgov	principal scientist	Russian Fed. Research Inst. of Fisheries and Oceanography (FSBSI "VNIRO"), Polar Branch, 6 Akademika Knipovicha St., 183038, Murmansk	dolgov@pinro.vniro.ru	No	?	No	No	No
Russia	Konstantin Fomin	principal specialist	Russian Fed. Research Inst. of Fisheries and Oceanography (FSBSI "VNIRO"), Polar Branch, 6 Akademika Knipovicha St., 183038, Murmansk	fomin@pinro.vniro.ru	No	?	No	No	No
USA	Lauren Fields	Foreign Affairs Specialist	NOAA Fisheries Office of International Affairs, Trade, and Commerce, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 USA	lauren.fields@noaa.gov	Yes	No	Signatory Point of Contact	Yes	No
USA	Bob Foy	Director, Alaska Fisheries Science Center	Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115, USA	robert.foy@noaa.gov	No	Yes	SCG Head of Delegation	Yes	DM-WG Co-chair
USA	Libby Logerwell	Research Biologist	Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115, USA	libby.logerwell@noaa.gov	No	No	No	Yes	No
USA	Catherine Berchok	Research Zoologist, Marine Mammal Laboratory	Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115, USA	Catherine.Berchok@noaa.gov	No	No	No	Yes	No
USA	Hannah Dawson	Arctic Activities Coordinator	Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115, USA	Hannah.Dawson@noaa.gov	No	No	No	No	No
USA	Dave Benton	Advisor	Ocean Conservancy	davebenton@gci.net	No	No	No	Yes	No
USA	Marie Greene	President	Inuit Circumpolar Council Alaska	marie@iccalaska.org	No	No	No	No	No
USA	Vernae Angnaboogok	Advisor	Inuit Circumpolar Council Alaska	vernae@iccalaska.org	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
USA	Leandra Sousa	Advisor	Inuit Circumpolar Council Alaska/North Slope Borough Dept. of Wildlife Management	leandra.sousa@north-slope.org	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
EU	Sarah Davie	Technical Director	MRAG Europe, 3rd Floor, 40 Mespil Road, Dublin 4, Republic of Ireland	s.davie@mrag-europe.eu	Yes	Yes	SCG Head of Delegation	Yes	Yes

**Appendix 3. Report of the 2024 Interim Meeting of the CAOFA SCG**

<b>Bureau</b>									
SCG Chair	John L. Bengtson	Director, Marine Mammal Laboratory	Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115, USA	john.bengtson@noaa.gov	No	No	SCG Chair	Yes	No
SCG Vice-chair	Hauke Flores	Senior scientist	Alfred-Wegener-Institute, Am Handelshafen 12, 27570 Bremerhaven, Germany	hauke.flores@awi.de	No	No	SCG Vice-chair; MM-WG Co-chair	Yes	No
<b>Observers</b>									
ICES	Alan Haynie	General Secretary	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), H.C. Andersens Boulevard 44-46, 1553 Copenhagen V., Denmark	alan.haynie@ices.dk	Yes	Yes	COP Contact	No	No
ICES	Lis L. Jørgensen	Scientist	Institute of Marine Research, Tromsø, Norway	lislin@hi.no	No	No	No	No	No
WWF	Steve MacLean	Managing Director – US Arctic	WWF – 810 N Street, Suite 300, Anchorage, AK 99501	steve.maclean@wwfus.org	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
WWF	Matt Spencer	Polar Oceans Specialist	WWF-UK, Living Planet Centre, Woking, UK	mspencer@wwf.org.uk	No	No	No	No	No
UK	Michelle Hackett	Head of International Fisheries Science	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF	Michelle.Hackett@defra.gov.uk	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
UK	Hayley Cox	Senior Policy Advisor	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF	Hayley.Cox@defra.gov.uk	No	Yes	COP Contact	Yes	Yes
UK	James Sharples	Head of NE Atlantic Multilateral Negotiations	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF	James.Sharples@defra.gov.uk	No	No	HoD CoP	Yes	Yes

## Appendix 4. Report of the 2024 Interim Meeting of the CAOFA SCG

DRAFT CAOFA Scientific Coordinating Group (SCG) Priorities and Work Plan: 2024 - 2026						Version: 1 November 2024	
Task No.	Priority	Task description	SCG2 report paragraphs	SCG Group	To be completed before March 2025 SCG3 meeting		Before 2026 SCG4 meeting
					Team leaders & members ( <i>Who</i> )	Product ( <i>What</i> )	Team leaders & product ( <i>Who/What</i> )
1		[Meet in fall 2024 to...] <b>Develop a process and timeline for consultation among the Parties</b> for scheduling vessels for joint expeditions into the Agreement Area, peripheral seas, and gateways, and for organizing teams of scientists, Indigenous Knowledge holders, and local experts to plan and conduct the research on these expeditions	22.a, 25.b, 30.a	MM			
2		[Meet in fall 2024 to...] <b>Develop a process to promote coordination between national programs</b> to facilitate collaboration and meet the data needs identified in the JPSRM Framework and the JPSRM Implementation Plan, including establishing annual meetings of Parties and program managers with Arctic research vessels to discuss planning and coordination of research cruises and related activities	22.b, 25.c, 30.b	MM			
3		[Meet in fall 2024 to...] <b>Identify a list of analyses to be conducted to provide advice</b> to the COP regarding species distributions and abundances in the JPSRM priority geographic areas; linkages among species; and forecasting of potential changes in CAO ecosystems that would affect resource availability	22.c	MM			
4		[Meet in fall 2024 to...] <b>Begin drafting a report to the COP regarding JPSRM Section 8.2:</b> coordination of Arctic research vessels.	22.d, 30.c	MM			
5		The [four JPSRM] <b>Standard Methods documents require further development</b> by the SCG by March 2025 for subsequent review and endorsement by the COP	23	MM			
6		<b>Identify a list of analyses to be conducted to provide advice to the COP</b> regarding species distributions and abundances in the JPSRM priority geographic areas (i.e., Agreement Area, peripheral seas, and gateways); linkages among species; and forecasting of potential changes in CAO ecosystems that would affect resource availability	24	MM			
7		<b>Create a new SCG working group to review exploratory fishing plans</b> [four draft terms of reference follow] [this action is one of four principal activities proposed for the SCG regarding implementation of the JPSRM]	25.a, 26, 27, 28, 29	MM			
8		[TOR 1] <b>Provide advice to the SCG on minimum scientific requirements</b> of the development of exploratory fishing plans according to the requirements within Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) developed by the COP	27.a, 57.b	MM			
9		[TOR 2] <b>Develop a process and procedures to facilitate the provision of comments and feedback on any exploratory fishing plans</b>	27.b, 57.b	MM			
10		[TOR 3] <b>Identify opportunities for coordination among exploratory fishing plans</b> to include Indigenous Knowledge, minimize duplication, maximize the scientific value of exploratory fishing data collection, and minimize the ecosystem impacts of exploratory fishing	27.c	MM			

## Appendix 4. Report of the 2024 Interim Meeting of the CAOFA SCG

Task No.	Priority	Task description	SCG2 report paragraphs	SCG Group	To be completed before <b>March 2025 SCG3 meeting</b>		Before 2026 SCG4 meeting
					Team leaders & members ( <i>Who</i> )	Product ( <i>What</i> )	Team leaders & product ( <i>Who/What</i> )
11		[TOR 4] <b>Ensure data collected during exploratory fishing</b> and subsequently provided to the Data Management Team <b>meet standards established</b> by the Data Management and Sharing Protocol (DMSP)	27.d	MM			
12		<b>Report progress on JPSRM implementation</b> [one of four principal activities proposed for the SCG regarding implementation of the JPSRM]	25.d, 30.c	MM			
13		<b>Convene a meeting of the Parties and program managers of national research programs in first quarter of 2025</b> [to address following three tasks]	30	MM			
14		<b>Begin consultation among the Parties for scheduling vessels for joint expeditions</b> into the Agreement Area, peripheral seas, and gateways, and for organizing teams of scientists, Indigenous Knowledge holders, and local experts to plan and conduct the research on these expeditions	30.a	MM			
15		<b>Begin designing a process to discuss collaborative research planning for 2025.</b> The SCG may invite other national and international programs to participate, as appropriate	30.b	MM			
16		<b>Report to the SCG regarding implementation pursuant to JPSRM Implementation Plan Section 7.2:</b> Coordination and collaboration among Parties' national science programs	30.c	MM			
17		<b>Re-establish the participant list from each Party</b> with a focus on only one or two people per Party to manage the meetings that focus on technical aspects of data management	47.a	DM			
18		<b>Map the adopted JPSRM and EF data types and standard methods to current DM protocols</b> in the DMSP. The SCG discussed the need for the DM-WG to work with the MM-WG to make sure there is not overlap in effort	47.b	DM			
19		<b>Establish the Data Management Team</b> and review the Terms of Reference to address any gaps in guidance for operationalizing the DMSP	47.c	DM			
20		<b>Identify data and information based on COP needs</b> to be made available on the Agreement website (public). The SCG also discussed adding data to the secure portion of the portal to assess the sharing of existing national datasets	47.d	DM			
21		<b>Develop Standard Operating Procedure to collate Data Sharing Protocol requirements</b> that include core metadata standards (and include evaluation of external data) and collect and share metadata for other (National) scientific data relevant to JPSRM	47.e, 47.f	DM			
22		<b>Convene a meeting of the DM-WG meeting in late 2024</b> to address the following four tasks:	49	DM			
23		<b>Discuss bringing together all relevant knowledge systems</b> under the JPSRM	49.a	DM			

## Appendix 4. Report of the 2024 Interim Meeting of the CAOFA SCG

Task No.	Priority	Task description	SCG2 report paragraphs	SCG Group	To be completed before <b>March 2025 SCG3 meeting</b>		Before 2026 SCG4 meeting
					Team leaders & members ( <i>Who</i> )	Product ( <i>What</i> )	Team leaders & product ( <i>Who/What</i> )
24		[By June 2025] <b>Develop processes and procedures for incorporating Indigenous Knowledge and local knowledge into the JPSRM database.</b> The SCG should review guidelines and procedures regarding consultation, acquisition, and ownership of Indigenous Knowledge consistent with Section 6.2 of the JPSRM Implementation Plan and the DMSP with the intent that these guidelines and procedures be periodically reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure they remain up to date and culturally appropriate,	49.b	DM			
25		<b>Report to the COP with recommendations regarding Section 7.3: Involving Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledge in the JPSRM.</b> Report will include recommendations for guidelines and procedures regarding consultation, acquisition, and ownership of Indigenous Knowledge, and procedures for incorporating Indigenous Knowledge into the JPSRM database, methods, and analysis	49.c	DM			
26		[By June 2025] <b>Develop a process to ensure the accuracy and authority of unpublished evaluations results;</b> all data and reports used by the JPSRM shall adhere to DMSP standards and processes, and be peer-reviewed and published.	49.d	DM			
27		[Seek] <b>an invitation from any SCG member to host an in-person SCG meeting in 2025.</b>	55	SCG			
28		<b>There is a priority need to understand VME habitats, related species, and their distributions</b> to: Inform spatial and temporal restrictions under CMMs for exploratory fishing, sensitivity to different types of fishing/sampling gear, and development of encounter protocols or move-on provisions.	57.a	SCG			
29		<b>SCG members will identify opportunities for communicating</b> among national research programs <b>and collaboration</b> with Indigenous Knowledge holders and local knowledge holders	59	SCG			
30		[Noting the importance of communicating among national research programs and collaboration with Indigenous Knowledge holders and local knowledge holders, <b>SCG members will identify opportunities for [such] collaboration.</b> For examples, some SCG members highlighted their existing research programs and invited SCG participants to join projects and participate in research	59	SCG, MM			
31		[Noting] the importance of collaborating with international science programs [to support the JPSRM, <b>SCG members] will identify individuals from within the SCG membership with current membership in International bodies</b> to initiate and report back on engagement/collaboration opportunities	60	SCG			
32		<b>The SCG tasks itself and the DM-WG with identifying an online communications</b> platform that is accessible to all SCG Members that can be used for online editing/revisions	62.a	SCG, DM			

**Appendix 5. Report of the 2024 Interim Meeting of the CAOFA SCG****Data Management Working Group (DM-WG) Update (November 2024)**

The DM-WG was established during COP 3 (June 2024) to be responsible for storing the JPSRM data in the centralized data archive and the coordinated metadata of other datasets being used by the Parties and provided in distributed data archives. In addition, the DM-WG is responsible for overseeing the data portal consistent with the Data Management and Sharing Protocol (DMSP) approved under the JPSRM.

**Priority tasks**

- Identify the Data Management Team (2-3 people) to review the Terms of Reference to address any gaps in guidance for operationalizing the Data Management Sharing Protocol.
- Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for each type of data expected to be collected, used, or shared under the Agreement. This will be based on Data Management Sharing Protocol requirements that include core metadata standards,
- Develop and propose a procedure for how the SCG will evaluate and interpret external data and information that the SCG uses.
- Identify data and information based on COP needs to be made available on the Agreement website (public). Note: the development of guidelines for public sharing of Agreement information and reports was formally moved to a COP website working group.
- Collect and share metadata for other (National) scientific data relevant to JPSRM.
- Identify the content and method of sharing Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge. Note: The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) offered to share processes and existing datasets recently developed that could be shared on the secure portion of the Agreement website. The ICC will be giving a presentation at the March/April in person SCG.

**Products and schedule**

- December 2024-January 2025; Convene meeting to bring together all relevant knowledge systems under the JPSRM.
- March 2025; Draft data SOPs.
- June 2025; report to the COP with recommendations regarding Section 7.3 (of JPSRM Implementation Plan: Involving Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledge in the JPSRM. Report will include recommendations for guidelines and procedures regarding consultation, acquisition, and ownership of Indigenous Knowledge, and procedures for incorporating Indigenous Knowledge into the JPSRM database, methods, and analysis.
- June 2025: Process to ensure the accuracy and authority of unpublished evaluations results; all data and reports used by the JPSRM shall adhere to DMSP standards and processes, and be peer-reviewed and published.

**DM-WG meeting dates in 2024-2026**

January 2025

February 2025

March 2025 (depending on in person SCG dates)