

Provisional Agenda
Extended Scientific Committee for the Thirty-First Meeting of the Scientific
Committee
24 – 28 August 2026
Brussels, Belgium

Discussion of blue highlighted agenda/sub-agenda items will commence by correspondence in advance of the meeting.

1. Opening

1.1. Introduction of Participants

1.2. Administrative Arrangements

2. Appointment of Rapporteurs

3. Adoption of Agenda and Document List

4. Review of SBT Fisheries

4.1. Presentation of National Reports

Members will submit national reports in advance of the meeting in accordance with CCSBT's [Template for national reports to the ESC](#). As agreed at ESC27, Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS) activities should be reported to the ESC in Member's National Reports, in the relevant areas of Section 7 and Annex 1 of the ESC annual report template.

4.2. Secretariat Review of Catches

5. Report from the Sixteenth Operating Model and Management Procedure (OMMP) Technical Meeting

6. Actions under the CCSBT Strategic Plan

6.1. Report back against the objectives of the Strategic Plan

At CCSBT 30, Members adopted a revised Strategic Plan¹ that outlines a common vision for how the Commission will operate in order to meet the overall objective of the Convention. The Strategic Plan states that "Subsidiary bodies holding responsibility for particular action items are expected to report back on the progress of those activities as part of their respective meeting reports". Members will be asked to update the previously agreed reporting template and provide an assessment of progress against those activities assigned to the ESC.

6.2. Capacity Building Workplan

CCSBT 31 in 2024 adopted the CCSBT's Capacity Building Workplan, which aims to prioritise needs and delivering effective capacity building initiatives to improve performance in key areas, particularly for developing Members. ESC is expected to

¹www.ccsbt.org/sites/default/files/userfiles/file/docs_english/operational_resolutions/CCSBT_Strategic_Plan.pdf

conduct an annual needs assessment, and the Secretariat and Chair will provide a paper to ESC 31 meeting with its preliminary assessment.

6.2.1. Capacity building needs assessment

Following the CCSBT Capacity Building Workplan, the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, will provide its initial needs assessment for the capacity building in the science area.

6.2.2. Potential capacity building projects

This is an opportunity for Members to recommend potential capacity building initiatives to address needs identified under 6.2.1.

In 2025, the ESC considered a potential capacity building project to strengthen the capacity to assess SBT landing sites across Indonesian ports and recommended that this project be conducted in 2026, but the EC did not approve it due to budget constraints. Instead, it was agreed that Australia would undertake to work with Indonesia to consider alternative sources of funding for this work. It is expected that Australia and Indonesia will report back on developments.

7. Review of results of the Scientific Research Program and other inter-sessional scientific activities

7.1. Results of scientific activities

It is anticipated that routine updates to ongoing work will be dealt with in the pre-meeting exchange, however, Members presenting more substantive updates or new work are asked to make a presentation during the meeting.

7.2. Maintenance and development of OMMP Code

Consultant to report back against 2026 workplan items relating to OM development not previously discussed as part of OMMP agenda item.

7.3. Update on NCNM estimates of unaccounted (fishing) mortality

As a part of the SRP, ESC 30 agreed to conduct a simple update of estimates of unaccounted mortality (UAM) by Non-Cooperating Non-Members (NCNM) for the planned stock assessment in 2026. It is expected that a paper on the result of this SRP project to be submitted by the consultant, Dr Charles Edwards.

7.4. Terms of Reference of the MP Review in 2027

Following the Metarules for the Cape Town Procedure, the ESC is required to conduct a review of the MP every six years, including a review of the performance of the MP and, on the basis of the review, determine whether the MP is on track to meet the rebuilding objective or whether a new MP is required. Under the Metarules, the next review is scheduled for 2027 and the ESC should therefore develop Terms of Reference for the MP review this year.

ESC 30 agreed that any MSE testing of new or revised MPs in light of the revised sustainable research budget could be considered as part of the TOR for the planned MP review in 2027. In addition, ESC 30 recommended that scenario testing for the 2027 MP review include climate change scenarios in the reference set and an investigation of the consequences in terms of revised targets.

To support discussion at ESC, Members are expected to submit papers proposing draft Terms of Reference.

8. Fisheries and Scientific Indicators of Stock Status

9. SBT Stock Assessment

The ESC is tasked with conducting a full SBT stock assessment every three years. The most recent full stock assessment was conducted during 2023, so the next full stock assessment is due to be completed at this meeting of the ESC.

10. Operation of the Management Procedure and SBT Management Advice

- 10.1. Evaluation of meta-rules and exceptional circumstances
- 10.2. Consideration of the potential impacts on the ESC's scientific advice arising from possible changes in Members' national allocations

The Extended Commission is currently considering possible changes to Member allocations from the 2027–2029 quota block onward. The ESC is expected to advise the EC on whether changes to the existing national allocations would affect the ESC's scientific advice (including the MP-recommended TAC), and, if so, the extent to which the advice based on the current OM and MP can be regarded as robust under such changes.

- 10.3. Confirmation of Management Procedure recommended TAC for 2027-2029
- 10.4. Summary of SBT management advice

11. Potential impacts of climate change

In 2025, the ESC agreed that the MP framework, including input data sources, and resulting TAC advice are currently robust to changes in recruitment and adult abundance. The ESC also agreed that climate change impacts are difficult to directly measure and that providing monitoring data that may be affected by climate impacts is a good approach for considering operational advice via the MP. Members are encouraged to submit papers for further discussion on those points by the ESC.

12. Update of the Scientific Research Program (SRP)

This is now a standing agenda item to allow Members to consider new proposals and/or changes to existing SRP projects (including timing of deliverables).

- 12.1. Long-term planning for gene tagging program

Placeholder for discussion noting that further consideration will be required as part of the review of the MP in 2027, following this year's stock assessment.

- 12.2. Multi-National Fishery Longline CPUE Data Standardisation Project

In 2025, the ESC recommended that this project be conducted in 2026, but the EC decided to delay the development of the new CPUE series to 2027. The ESC should consider whether to recommend that the EC implement the project in 2027 as proposed last year, or with modification of the SRP proposal.

13. Report from the Sixteenth Meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group

The Sixteenth Meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group was held from 3-6 March 2026. ERSWG 16 did not make specific requests to the ESC to consider. Although the ESC cannot change the ERSWG 16 report, it may provide comments to the Extended Commission on the ERSWG report (including advice and recommendations).

14. Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS)

Members agreed to include an agenda item to address issues relating to EM/S in future meetings of the ESC. At ESC 30, New Zealand advised that intersessional work in coordination with Australia had occurred to demonstrate how information is collected by EM to meet the requirements of the SOPS but that as part of this exercise it was determined that additional work would need to be undertaken and a paper be submitted at ESC 31.

15. Requirements for Data Exchange in 2027

16. Research Mortality Allowance

17. Workplan, Timetable and Research Budget for 2027 (and beyond)

- 17.1. Overview, time schedule and budgetary implications of proposed 2027 research activities and implications of Scientific Research Program for the work plan and budget.
- 17.2. Timing, length and structure of next meetings (including ESC, OMMP and relevant subsidiary bodies).

18. Other Business

- 18.1. Agreement under the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

The BBNJ Agreement entered into force in January 2026, and procedures to operationalise it are currently underway. Some areas covered by the Agreement, such as the Clearing House Mechanism, Area-based Management Tools (ABMT) and MPA, are anticipated to require consideration and response by the CCSBT and the ESC in the future. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat will submit a paper providing information on the current status of the BBNJ Agreement and on matters that may be relevant to the ESC's future work.

19. Adoption of Meeting Report

20. Close of Meeting