

Original: English

### SUMMARY NOTE ON THE ABNJ/GEF PROGRAMME

Looking at the principles agreed in the 2012 meeting of the Commission with regard to the partnership with the ABNJ/GEF and based on the status of the cooperation to date, it can be concluded that the partnership with this programme has not been successful thus far.

The issue was again presented to the Commission in 2015 in the form of document PLE-114 (**Appendix 1**). The Secretariat clearly outlined the complications experienced with the ABNJ-GEF project and the fact that ICCAT no longer played a major role in this programme and it was necessary to reconsider ICCAT's position in the project. As a result, the Commission agreed in 2015 that ICCAT should only continue to collaborate with this programme should a clear benefit to ICCAT be identified. Additionally, it was agreed that if the program had any concrete offer to make to ICCAT it should be accepted.

Accordingly, in 2016 the Secretariat once more met with the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project Coordinator to discuss potential areas of collaboration. As a result a discussion document was drafted and circulated to all participants in that meeting (**Appendix 2**). The document identified 4 major areas for collaboration, as well as several activities that needed further discussion before an agreement could be reached. The major areas for collaboration included:

- A Feasibility study to develop a web data submission and validation system, with consideration being given to possible financial support provided by the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project (about US\$315 000).
- As FAD issues are common to most of the tuna RFMOs, in accordance with what was agreed by the Kobe Steering Committee, a discussion is taking place to coordinate the efforts across these RFMOs. This coordination is with regards to conducting a study and analysis of FADs data available at ICCAT and other relevant tuna RFMOs Secretariats. It is envisioned that it may be possible to propose the possible harmonization of FAD data collection through t-RFMOs. It is planned that the report of this study will be presented to meeting of the joint t-RFMOs FADs Working Group, with consideration being given to possible co-financial support (on the order of US\$150 000) provided by the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project.
- The joint tRFMO MSE Technical Working Group and follow up activities within the framework of the Kobe process. A physical meeting was held from the 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016 at the ICCAT Secretariat in Madrid, with travel support provided by ABNJ to some of the participants. The support from the programme amounting to US\$35 000.
- Implementation of the Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management (EBFM). The Secretariat (as well as CPC scientists) will participate in an initial EBFM meeting to be held at FAO in Rome in December 2016, with travel support provided by ABNJ to some of the participants (1 Secretariat staff, the SCRS Chair and the SC-ECO co-convener).

Additional potential areas of collaboration were mentioned, including the implementation of Port State Measures in ICCAT and MCS Best Practices.

The total funding available to ICCAT for collaboration is US\$500 000. At this stage, it is still unclear as to what the exact benefits to ICCAT will be, as the Secretariat has observed that ICCAT continues to be marginalised in terms of core activities. The discussed activities mentioned show the Secretariats willingness to cooperate with the programme, but the treatment received thus far does not provide ICCAT the status as true partners in the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project, but rather as data providers and collaborators to the programme.