

Original: English

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

(ICCAT Secretariat)

ISSF

The International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) continues providing the Secretariat with detail catch (by vessel trip, species and commercial size category) for all purchases made ISSF-participating companies. These correspond to unloading of Atlantic catches from tropical tunas (bigeye, yellowfin, skipjack) and albacore to canning plants around the world. This information has previously been used by the SCRS scientists to complement and improve the Ghanaian Task II statistics.

CITES

In 2016 ICCAT and CITES collaborated in order to conduct a training course for field workers, scientists and data managers from the West Africa region (in English, French and Spanish simultaneously). There are several countries in this region that were identified as priority countries for assistance under the EU-CITES project with regard to implementing the new CITES listings for sharks and rays. These workshops were originally planned to be conducted in Cote d'Ivoire in April 2016, however, due to circumstances beyond the control of the Secretariat, the course was moved to Madrid from the 12-15 September 2016. Training covered issues such as species identification, including the provision of ID cards, biological and fisheries sampling techniques, data reporting requirements and implementation of CITES shark listings on Appendix II. Unfortunately due to the change in location, the course become more expensive than was previously budgeted and so additional activities such as the collection of catch and biological data using these funds was no longer possible. The course included 36 participants from 12 countries, all from the West African region. It is hoped that this training will improve the quality of data being collected in the region, leading to significantly increase the member states capacity to make NDFs. This process is not currently possible with the information available. It will also improve the data available to ICCAT for the assessment and management of shark stocks in the region through analysis of the data by the ICCAT shark species group.

ICES

Considering the fruitful experience ICCAT and ICES have had in recent years with regard to scientific collaboration, there is the willingness of both organisations to strengthen this cooperation and explore new initiatives and discussions have commenced between the Secretariats. It has been agreed therefore that it is appropriate and desirable to improve collaboration between ICCAT SCRS-ICES, particularly in the areas of by-catch and sharks issues, through our Sub-committee on Ecosystems and by-catch and the Shark species group. Specifically, it would be convenient to keep the participation of ICES scientific experts in ICCAT shark stock assessments and vice versa. The Secretariat attended the 2016 ICES Working Group on Sharks (WKSHARKS Lisbon, Portugal, 19-21 January 2016) providing a summary of the ICCAT data on elasmobranchs including catches, fishing effort, size and tagging information. The main work, in recent years, of the ICCAT sharks working task was also highlighted, as well as a summary of the management actions undertaken by the Commission for these species. In addition, discussions have taken place with ICES in 2015 regarding the continuation of the development of stock assessment methods, following on from the highly successful Strategic Initiative on Stock Assessment Methods (SISAM), by potentially holding joint intra-regional stock assessment methods Working Groups from 2016 onwards. Lastly, it was proposed that following the joint ICCAT/ICES training courses that have been held in the past, ICCAT could continue to work with ICES on areas of capacity building.

GEF- Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project

As the ICCAT request for eBCD financial assistance was rejected by the GEF-Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project, the cooperation with the programme was submitted to the 2015 ICCAT Commission meeting. It was decided to continue to cooperate with the programme provided that there are benefits to ICCAT. The ICCAT Secretariat discussed with the management team of the ABNJ project, the possibility to cooperate in the following areas:

- Feasibility study to develop a web data submission and validation system, including the development of a demo application/functional version.
- FADs - A joint tuna RFMO FAD Working Group meeting is under discussion and being planned for the near future.
- Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries. The Secretariat (as well as CPC scientists) will participate in an initial EAF meeting to be held at FAO in Rome in December.
- The organisation of the tRFMO-MSE Working Group and follow up activities. A physical meeting to be held in November 2016 at the ICCAT Secretariat in Madrid, with travel support provided by ABNJ.

The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)

In 2016, ICCAT signed guidelines for cooperation with ACAP. This cooperation is a non-binding agreement that covers such issues as participation as observers in each other's meetings, as well as consultation, cooperation and collaboration on issues of common issue.

Consortium on Billfish Management and Conservation (CBMC)

In January of 2016, the secretariat received a Letter of Intent (**Appendix 1**) from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, regarding the Establishment and Operations of the Consortium on Billfish Management and Conservation. The secretariat was requested to sign the letter of intent on behalf of ICCAT. It was explained to the proponents that this letter must be addressed during the 20th Special meeting of the ICCAT Commission. The secretariat will then respond according to the decision taken by the Commission.