

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE
CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS



COMMISSION INTERNATIONALE POUR LA
CONSERVATION DES THONIDES DE L'ATLANTIQUE

COMISION INTERNACIONAL PARA LA
CONSERVACION DEL ATUN ATLANTICO

Madrid, 3 March 2026

ICCAT CIRCULAR # 01351 / 2026

SUBJECT: CALL FOR TENDERS - 2026 NORTH ATLANTIC ALBACORE ELECTRONIC TAGGING CAMPAIGN

I should like to transmit a Call for Tenders for the *2026 North Atlantic Albacore Electronic Tagging Campaign*, which will be carried out within the Atlantic Albacore Tuna Year Programme (ALBYP), in line with the SCRS workplan for this year.

I would be grateful if you could distribute this Call for Tenders to qualified people and institutions that may be interested.

ICCAT is kindly requesting a quotation for such work, which shall be developed according to the Terms of reference herein attached. The detailed offer shall be submitted **only to the attention of** the ICCAT Executive Secretary, [Mr. Camille Jean Pierre Manel](#), and Cc'ing [Ms. Stasa Tensek](#), by **20 March 2026**.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Executive Secretary



Camille Jean Pierre Manel

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Attachment: Terms of Reference - 2026 North Atlantic Albacore Electronic Tagging Campaign.



Terms of Reference

2026 North Atlantic Albacore Electronic Tagging Campaign

1. ICCAT tagging programme and background

ICCAT has a longstanding record of tagging programmes that over the past decade have been reinvigorated for albacore, which falls under the ICCAT mandate.

The ICCAT Albacore Research Program (ALBYP) was originally established in 2021 with the general objective of providing more robust scientific advice for the species. For this, the main objectives include research on improving the biological parameters and the life cycle and distribution of albacore, modelling efforts to improve the abundance indices and simulation for evaluating management strategies. The Albacore Species Group considers that it is essential to improve the knowledge of the species life cycle and distribution patterns to revise basic assumptions on stock assessments and Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE).

This Call for Tenders concerns the tagging objectives, specifically to fund the electronic tagging (with miniPATs and internal archival tags) of albacore in the northern Atlantic, that have been established for 2026 by the Albacore Species Group, approved by the SCRS within the ALBYP planned activities, and endorsed by the Commission at the 2025 Annual Meeting.

2. General objectives of the ALBYP tagging programme

Among the ALBYP research tasks is electronic tagging, which aims to address several important biological and ecological issues related to albacore. Main topics being addressed include movements, distribution patterns, stock boundaries and habitat use.

Some previous tagging activities in the northeast Atlantic took place between 2019 and 2025, and this Call aims to enhance the albacore tagging programme. Accordingly, a tagging campaign (could include several trips) is envisaged for carrying out electronic tagging in the northern Atlantic, with a particular focus in the northeastern Atlantic (the Bay of Biscay and Canary Islands), during the spring and summer of 2026. However, new areas (especially in the western Atlantic) will also be considered of interest.

The tagging campaign in 2026 will include deployment of a minimum of 12 miniPATs and 8 internal archival tags, to be implanted in albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*). These e-tags will be provided by ICCAT and, if necessary, the ICCAT Secretariat and/or the SCRS and/or Albacore Species Group will also be available to facilitate training and guidance on their use and deployment.

Bidders should describe the logistics of their tagging operations, the fishing gears they propose to use and outline how mortality of returned fish will be kept to a minimum. Tagging will be distributed over as much of the size range of the target species as possible, on the prioritized areas. Only specimens classified in *Perfect* (no visual damage) or *Moderate* (superficial damage) condition should be tagged (see [Injury codes in ICCAT for TG02.CnvTReRc](#)).

Bidders should describe **their vessel's ability to conduct tagging and the equipment to be used to catch and retain alive and in good conditions the albacore specimens to be tagged**. Additionally, whatever boat is to be used, a description should be provided of its capacity to comfortably accommodate and feed the tagging team onboard and ensure their safety during the tagging trips.



An **experienced coordinator will be assigned** to the offer who has specific experience in electronic tagging on albacore or other pelagic and highly migratory species (e.g. bluefin, bigeye or other tunas and/or pelagic sharks). This Coordinator will maintain close communication with the ICCAT Secretariat, the Albacore Species Group Rapporteur and the ALBYP Tagging Coordinator, and will **be responsible for directly managing all field activities** related with this offer, the scientific teams onboard, and their training and monitoring. The coordinator will coordinate all the activities, such as selecting and training the tagging team, monitoring the related field activities, i.e. supervising the teams involved, the operating tasks of the fishing vessels and their crews, and supervise data handling and processing. Ultimately, the Coordinator will be responsible for providing all the tagging data for input to the ICCAT tagging database.

The tagging team should **preferably include at least an electronic tagging specialist** with demonstrated experience, and any additional scientific staff deemed necessary.

The budget available at ICCAT for those tagging activities in 2026, on the basis of the tagging design previously approved by ICCAT, is considered sufficient to support the **deployment of at least 12 miniPATs and 8 archival tags during the campaign at sea. In-kind contribution provided by the tender** can be used to partially offset cost of the tagging programme and **will be scored** within the evaluation of the bid.

3. Contractor tasks

The Contractor(s), who will work in close consultation with the ICCAT Secretariat, the Albacore Species Group Rapporteur and ALBYP Tagging Coordinator, will conduct the tagging activity in the specified geographical areas.

The Contractor(s) will be responsible for the basic data management and for provision of all data to be included in the ICCAT tagging database, using the forms provided by ICCAT. If any previously tagged fish are recaptured during tagging operations, they will be reported to ICCAT with the appropriate tagging forms.

This contract should be closed by **30 November 2026**. It is assumed that all activities should be completed before the end of October 2026, and the remaining period should be used for data analysis and to prepare the draft and final reports.

Detail of the areas and numbers of specimens to be electronically tagged and released

The Contractor(s) will provide a proposal to achieve the ICCAT ALBYP tagging objectives for the 2026 programme, which will ensure the following:

- a) The target is to deploy a minimum of 12 miniPATs and 8 internal archival tags in Atlantic albacore. The priority area is the northeast Atlantic, mostly Canary Island and Bay of Biscay, but the western Atlantic could also be considered.
- b) The electronic pop-up and internal archival tags will be provided by ICCAT, available from the ICCAT ALBYP. Precise instructions will be provided for programming and preparing the tags. The tagging team will be responsible for ensuring that the tags deployed are programmed according to the defined settings specific to the species tagged, including by reprogramming as necessary using the provided instructions.
- c) The tagging team will be responsible for providing tagging applicators and any other materials needed for the tagging process.
- d) The fishing gear and fishing strategy to be used in the tagging should be clearly mentioned in the offer.



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- e) The tagging campaign should have a minimum duration of 4-days, or until all provided electronic tags have been deployed, but the maximum number of fishing days should be clearly mentioned.
- f) Minimum data to be collected and properly reported to ICCAT include: tag platform transmitting terminal (PTT) and serial number (S/N); species name; size (straight fork-length); detailed tagging location (latitude and longitude); tagging date and time; fishing and gear details. The location of the hook has to be recorded, and if it was removed prior to releasing the specimen. The general condition of the tagged animal should be assessed, and any visible injuries at the time of tagging should be recorded and reported, clearly indicating the location of the injury. For this purpose, the codes stated in the ICCAT Form [TG02-CnvTReRc](#) should be used.
- g) Yellow conventional tags will also be implanted on specimens tagged with internal archival tags. Those should be implanted on the dorsal musculature below the dorsal fin. The conventional tags will be provided by ICCAT. The data to be collected and reported to ICCAT is the same as the data from the electronic tags.

Deliverables

- #1 An SCRS presentation on the activities carried out shall be provided to the Albacore Species Group September meeting and submitted to the ICCAT Secretariat no later than **7 September 2026**. The presentation shall include the description of the work carried out up to that date, the number of tagged specimens in the various areas (by tag type).
- #2 The **draft final report** will be submitted to the ICCAT Secretariat by **30 October 2026** at the latest, including the following:
 - a) Full description of the work carried out for the tagging activities in the various areas, with the total number of tagged Atlantic Albacore and specification;
 - b) Detailed description of the methodology and protocols;
 - c) Maps of the areas in which the tagging was carried out;
 - d) Detailed ICCAT forms ([TG03-ElеTReRc](#)) with the definitive number of tagged specimens by area, size composition and type of tag (miniPATs or internal archival tag + conventional tag);
 - e) Detailed report of all specimens caught, including: species, size, sex (if available), fate (retained or discarded), condition at haulback and when discarded;
 - f) Any possible recommendations for adjusting the tagging strategy both electronic tags in future phases of this project;
 - g) An Executive Summary.
- #3 The **final report** will be prepared taking into account any comments provided (no later than 10 November 2026) by ICCAT and the relevant SCRS officers, and will be submitted, along with the full administrative report including copies of all the administrative documents, by **30 November 2026**, at the latest.

Contractor minimum qualifications

- Documented multi-year experience in research related to oceanic, pelagic and highly migratory species, including large scale tagging that have included tagging using pop-up satellite archive tags.
- Availability of sufficiently qualified scientific and technical staff to carry out the duties.
- Availability of the necessary vessel(s) to carry out the duties.
- Availability of at least one specialist in managing tagging databases.
- Excellent working knowledge of one of the three official languages of ICCAT (English, French, Spanish). A high level of knowledge of English is highly desirable.



Request for bids

Interested entities should submit an offer by e-mail **only** to the attention of the ICCAT Executive Secretary, [Mr. Camille Manel](#) and [Ms. Stasa Tensek](#), by **20 March 2026**, including:

- a) Acknowledgment of this Call for Tenders.
- b) A detailed offer, based on the objectives of this Call for Tenders, describing the methodologies to deploy the minimum number of miniPATs and Internal archival tags, the protocols to be adopted and the commitment to provide the raw data (as an electronic file) to be reflected in the draft final report (**Deliverable #2**) and the final report (**Deliverable #3**).
- c) The curricula of the scientific staff.
- d) The curriculum of the institution(s) or entity(ies) applying for the ICCAT tagging activity, with any documented experience in these fields, to include recent and relevant contracts for the same or similar items and other references (including contract numbers, points of contact with telephone numbers and other relevant information).
- e) An estimated budget for the tagging activity and for including the data in the ICCAT tagging database, to be detailed by individual components (e.g. tagging staff, organization staff including the time for data input, vessel hire (if applicable), operational costs, travels, consumables, etc.), any discount terms (overhead to cover administrative and general costs could be admitted within a maximum limit of 10% of the personnel costs), as well as any in-kind contributions.
- f) The name, address, and telephone number of the tendering body and the focal point for the tagging and reporting components.
- g) The bank account of the tendering body, (bank name, bank address, name of account holder, account number, IBAN and SWIFT codes), and the tax identification code.
- h) The institutional and administrative background of the tendering body (e.g. statutes, type of institution, annual budget, budget control procedures, etc.).
- i) A detailed list of any subcontracting activities.
- j) A declaration that the offering institution will follow this Call for Tenders, and/or approved modifications agreed upon, and the administrative rules specified in the contract.
- k) A declaration that all the comments eventually made on the draft final report (**Deliverable #2**) will be addressed in the final report (**Deliverable #3**) prior to submission to the ICCAT SCRS.
- l) A declaration that the staff and all the subcontracted staff will be covered by full insurance for the tagging activities to be carried out according to the Call for Tenders, excluding ICCAT from all responsibility concerning the work to be done by each offering institution.
- m) A statement specifying the extent of agreement with all terms, conditions, and provisions herein included, particularly specifying the date for the draft final report (**Deliverable #2**) and the date for the final report (**Deliverable #3**).

In the case of a consortium or group of entities, an administrative and a scientific responsible entity should be identified. Subcontracts will be detailed in the proposal.

Offers that fail to furnish the required documentation or information, or that reject the terms and conditions of the Call for Tenders will not be considered.

Contractors can be either research institutions, such as government or private laboratories, universities, private firms, individual scientists or other entities having the qualifications required.

The Contractor should be available to report to any meeting requested by ICCAT.



Payment details

Disbursements will be made according to the following schedule:

1. **40% of the total amount of the contract upon signing of the contract** and after receiving a regular invoice which may be submitted at the latest 30 days after the signature of the contract.
2. **20% of the total amount of the contract upon completion and acceptance of Deliverable #1** and after receiving a regular invoice.
3. **20% of the total amount of the contract upon completion and acceptance of Deliverable #2** and after receiving a regular invoice.
4. **20% of the total amount of the contract after the approval of Deliverable #3**, after receiving a regular invoice according to work proposal and a complete set of documents concerning the expenses incurred under the contract, no later than **30 November 2026**.

Selection of proposals

The ICCAT Secretariat will review the offer(s). Following the revision process, the ICCAT Executive Secretary will notify the entity selected for the contract as soon as the selection process is completed. The contract will be awarded on the basis of competitive tendering and the evaluation of proposals will be undertaken objectively, consistently and without bias towards particular suppliers.

Proposal(s) will be evaluated against a pre-determined set of criteria, which include: i) cost (25%); ii) proven track record (20%); iii) technical merit based on work plan (25%); iv) providing in-kind contributions to the budget (20%); and v) flexibility as regards future changes in requirements (10%).

Logistics

All documents provided by the Contractor must be in MS Word or compatible software; tables must be in Excel format or compatible; figures and pictures must be in JPEG or TIFF format or compatible. Tagging data will be included in the ICCAT tagging database. All documents submitted must be in English.

Copyright

All the material produced by the Contractor will remain the property of the ICCAT, will be kept confidential, and cannot, in any case, be circulated by the Contractor. The scientific use of the data by the Contractor will always be notified to ICCAT in advance for clearance.

For further information concerning this Call for Tenders, please contact [Dr. Miguel Neves dos Santos](#) at the ICCAT Secretariat.



Annex 1

Duties and responsibilities of the Tagging Coordinator

The duties and responsibilities of the Tagging Coordinator for each tender will be as follows:

- Be the liaison officer between the Contractor, the ICCAT Secretariat and ALBYP Tagging Coordinator for all practical issues concerning the tagging activities. This will include consultation regarding when tagging of species of secondary priority may commence (e.g. if primary priority species are persistently unavailable) and communicating this to the tagging team.
- Selection and training of the staff engaged in the tagging programme at sea, organising the necessary training course if needed.
- If needed, and in collaboration with the ICCAT ALBYP Tagging Coordinators and ICCAT Secretariat, implement tag promotional and recovery activities. This will possibly entail travel and contacting major shark landing ports and direct liaison with the fishing industry and scientists involved with fisheries catching pelagic sharks.
- Other activities, as required, to ensure successful implementation of the ICCAT ALBYP tagging programme.
- Work in constant, close cooperation with the ICCAT Secretariat and ALBYP Tagging Coordinators, keeping them informed of all the details, any possible difficulties, and progress made.