

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, 30 March 2026

ICCAT GBYP CIRCULAR # G-00112/ 2026

SUBJECT: CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST: ICCAT ATLANTIC-WIDE RESEARCH PROGRAMME FOR BLUEFIN TUNA (GBYP) - ELECTRONIC TAGGING IN PHASE 15 - YEAR 2026

I should like to transmit a Call for Expressions of Interests for the 2026 GBYP Electronic Tagging Programme, which will be carried out within the ICCAT Atlantic-Wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna (Phase 15), in line with the SCRS workplan for this year.

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

ICCAT is kindly requesting proposals 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 **14 April 2026**.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

P.O. Executive Secretary

Miguel Neves dos Santos
Assistant Executive Secretary

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Attachment: ToRs – Call for Expressions of Interest to collaborate with GBYP E-tagging programme (English version only).



Terms of Reference

ICCAT Atlantic-Wide Research Programme for Bluefin tuna (GBYP) – Electronic Tagging in Phase 15 - year 2026

Call for Expressions of Interest to collaborate with GBYP E-tagging programme

GBYP tagging programme background

Since GBYP Phase 10, a new strategic approach for the development of the GBYP electronic tagging program, based on strengthening the collaboration with CPCs' e-tagging national programs, has been successfully implemented.

In line with the SCRS workplan for the Bluefin Tuna Species Group for 2026, which includes carrying out tagging activities, and in order to continue taking advantage of the synergies between the tagging programs developed at national level and those of GBYP, the GBYP Steering Committee has proposed launching a new Call for Expressions of Interest aiming at continuing collaboration within the GBYP e-tagging program.

General objectives of the current GBYP tagging programme

Considering the recommendations from the SCRS Bluefin Tuna Species Group adopted by the Commission, the GBYP Steering Committee has agreed that in 2026 a total of up to 111 ICCAT GBYP owned electronic tags could be deployed. These include 23 internal archival tags, 47 archival pop-up satellite tags and 41 acoustic tags.

The deployment of the archival tags aims at enhancing the current knowledge of the species' population structure, its spatial distribution and migratory patterns within the Mediterranean Sea, and determining the proportion and population structure of fish moving to the Atlantic Ocean.

In the case of the acoustic tags, the aim is to generate independent estimates of eastern bluefin tuna mortality rates, taking advantage of the newly established acoustic curtain of receivers set across the Strait of Gibraltar. Therefore, GBYP will support also the reinforcement of the acoustic receivers' network in the southern coast of Portugal by supporting the deployment of two new acoustic receivers.

The **priority areas** for the deployment of the **e-tags** are as follows:

- **Archival tags** - spawning grounds in the **Mediterranean Sea**, including Eastern Mediterranean, and Western and Central Mediterranean, targeting adult fish. Large individuals that remain in the Mediterranean in Autumn and Winter are also of interest;
- **Acoustic tags** - **Gulf of Cadiz and southern coast of Portugal**, individuals performing migrations to and from Mediterranean Sea spawning grounds (i.e. at least 21 acoustic tags shall be deployed on fish entering the Mediterranean Sea, and another 20 tags shall be deployed on fish exiting the Mediterranean Sea).

The **secondary priority** area for the deployment of the archival tags is the **Southeastern areas of BFT distribution in the Atlantic**, namely the **Canary Islands and North Moroccan coast**), and if possible, **Senegalese and Mauritanian** waters.



The proposals selected by the GBYP Steering Committee, will be notified on the number of GBYP owned tags to be awarded to the respective proposal, aiming their deployment during tagging campaigns to be carried out in 2026/early 2027.

Tasks to be carried out

The responsible for each of the selected proposals will work in close consultation with the GBYP coordination team at the ICCAT Secretariat, and shall conduct the tagging activities in the specified geographical areas.

He/she 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.

The tagging activities should be concluded before **31 December 2026**, with the exception of those activities which had been agreed to be conducted in early 2027 (by 28 February 2027, at the latest). 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.

The proposal shall take into consideration the following:

- a) The priority and secondary areas of deployment for the archival and acoustic tags mentioned above.
- b) All tags will be provided by ICCAT, which were previously programmed and tethered. However, teams may suggest different programming and tethering, which they will be responsible for ensuring, once approved by ICCAT, bearing in mind the different objectives pursued. No changes to tag settings or tether will be allowed without the previous approval from ICCAT.
- c) The tagging team will be responsible for providing tagging applicators and any other materials needed for the tagging process. However, if needed by may require these from ICCAT, which will be provided subject to availability.
- d) The fishing gear and fishing strategy to be used in the tagging should be clearly mentioned in the offer.
- e) Minimum data to be collected and properly reported to ICCAT include: tag platform transmitting terminal (PTT) and serial number (S/N); species size (e.g. straight fork-length); detailed tagging location (latitude and longitude); tagging date and time; fishing and gear details. When hooks are used for catching the specimens, 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.
- f) Yellow conventional tags shall also be implanted on specimens tagged with 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.



GBYP will not provide funding to cover the deployment costs. However, if required and strictly necessary, based on sound justifications, GBYP will consider providing limited financial funding, namely to support the inclusion of expert taggers to assist local teams during the e-tagging operations.

Deliverables

- #1 A SCRS document on the activities carried out shall be provided to the first Bluefin tuna Species Group meeting scheduled after the conclusion of the tagging activities and submitted to the ICCAT Secretariat at least one week before the start of the meeting. The document shall include the description of the work carried out, the number of tagged specimens, when and location, and species size (by tag type if applicable).
- #2 The **draft final report** will be submitted to the ICCAT Secretariat by **15 December 2026** (or 14 March 2027 in the case of those tagging campaigns scheduled for early 2027) at the latest, including the following:
 - a) Full description of the work carried out for the tagging activities, with the total number of tagged bluefin tunas and specifications;
 - 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-ElTReRc](#)) 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 by the GBYP coordination team after coordination with the relevant SCRS officers, and will be submitted no later than **25 December 2026** (or 21 March 2027 in the case of those tagging campaigns scheduled for early 2027), 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 archival and/or acoustic tags.
- Availability of sufficiently qualified scientific and technical staff to carry out the duties.
- Availability of the necessary vessel(s) or other tagging platforms to carry out the duties.
- 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.

Selection of proposals

The GBYP Steering Committee will review the offer(s). The selection of the proposals will be done on the basis of competitive tendering and the evaluation of proposals will be undertaken objectively, consistently and without bias towards particular teams. Proposal(s) will be evaluated against a pre-determined set of criteria, which include: i) tagging area (35%); ii) proven track record (20%), experience in this field of the team(s); iii) technical merit based on work plan (25%), scientific and technical quality of the proposal; and iv) providing in-kind contributions to the budget (20%).



Request for proposals

Proposals can be submitted by either research institutions, such as government or private laboratories, universities, private firms, individual scientists or other entities having the qualifications required. Teams willing to collaborate with ICCAT GBYP e-tagging campaigns should submit a proposal to gby@iccat.int, **by 14 April 2026 at the latest**, summarizing their experience in electronic tagging and the workplans for the next national e-tagging campaigns. Proposal should include a description of methodologies, location and timing of tagging operations, targeted bluefin tuna sizes, and number and type of tags expected to be deployed, as well as the number and type of GBYP electronic tags (PSAT, archival internal or acoustics) that could be deployed within the campaign(s). For such purposes, the proposals should be prepared using the template contained in **Annex 1**. For further information the applicants can contact the ICCAT GBYP Coordinator (Dr Francisco Alemany or gby@iccat.int).

Proposals that fail to furnish the required documentation or information, or that reject the terms and conditions of the Expression of Interest will not be considered.

Logistics

All documents provided within the scope of the Memorandum of Understanding signed with ICCAT must be in MS Word or compatible software, closely follow the [New Guidelines for Authors of Scientific Documents for the ICCAT SCRS and Collective Volume Series](#) and the [available template](#). Tagging data will be included in the ICCAT tagging database. All documents submitted must be in English.

Copyright

All the material produced within the scope of the Memorandum of Understanding signed with ICCAT will remain the property of the ICCAT, will be kept confidential, and cannot, in any case, be circulated by the Contractor, without prior clearance from ICCAT. 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 Francisco Alemany](#) at the ICCAT Secretariat.



Application Form
ICCAT GBYP Expression of Interest to collaborate with GBYP electronic tagging program

Background and objectives

(Max. 1 page)

In this section, please provide background information on your experience in BFT electronic tagging, including a general description of your institution's electronic tagging program and its main achievements. Please also list the main objective of your electronic tagging program for 2026, as well as any other relevant secondary objectives.

Project activity

(Max. 3/4 pages)

Describe e-tagging campaigns strategies, including vessels to be used, location and timing of the operations, targeted bluefin tuna sizes, and tags deployment and tagged fish release methodologies. Specify total number and type of tags owing to your institution/s expected to be deployed, as well as the number and type of requested GBYP electronic tags (PSAT, archival internal or acoustic), as well as any other relevant information.

Expected outcome

(Max. 1/2 pages)

Please describe the expected outcome of your activities, and how these outcomes will contribute to improve the SCRS advice and achieve GBYP objectives.

Estimated cost

(Max. 1/2 pages)

Please provide a table with a breakdown of the estimate in-kind cost associated with the activities to be developed, and any funding required other than ICCAT tags.