

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, 26 August 2025

ICCAT GBYP CIRCULAR # G-00510/2025

SUBJECT: CALL FOR TENDERS – AERIAL SURVEY FOR BLUEFIN SPAWNING AGGREGATIONS: 2025 AERIAL SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF MODEL-BASED APPROACHES FOR THE STANDARDIZATION OF THE INDEX OF ABUNDANCE – ATLANTIC-WIDE RESEARCH PROGRAMME FOR BLUEFIN TUNA (ICCAT GBYP – PHASE 14)

I should like to transmit herewith the Call for Tenders - Aerial survey for bluefin spawning aggregations: 2025 aerial survey data analysis and further development of model-based approaches for the standardization of the index of abundance - Atlantic-Wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna (ICCAT GBYP – Phase 14).

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

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration

Executive Secretary



Camille Jean Pierre Manel

Distribution:

- **Commission Officers:**

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- **Cooperating Parties, Entities, or Fishing Entities**

Attachment: Call for Tenders.



Terms of Reference

Aerial survey for bluefin spawning aggregations – 2025 Aerial survey data analysis and further development of model-based approaches for the standardization of the index of abundance Atlantic-Wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna (ICCAT GBYP – Phase 14)

1. GBYP background and objectives

The main objectives of the ICCAT Atlantic-Wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna (GBYP) are to improve: (a) the understanding of key biological and ecological processes, (b) current assessment methodology, (c) the management procedures, and (d) advice.

Key tasks are to reduce uncertainty in stock assessment and to provide robust management advice. This requires improved knowledge of key biological processes and parameters. Currently almost all the data used in stock assessments are obtained from fisheries-dependent data, which can be affected by changes in exploitation patterns and TACs. It is therefore important to obtain data from alternative sources, such as the aerial survey for bluefin tuna spawning aggregations, in order to verify the assumptions made when conducting the assessments or to improve the current data sets used in Operating Model (OM) or Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE).

Therefore, one of the major research tasks under the ICCAT Atlantic-Wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna has been the development of aerial surveys in the main core spawning areas of Bluefin tuna (BFT) in the Mediterranean: Balearic Sea (Area A), Tyrrhenian Sea (Area C), Ionian Sea (Area E) and Eastern Mediterranean (Area G) for estimating the abundance and biomass of spawning aggregations, aiming to provide a fishery-independent index of relative abundance of spawning stock biomass.

Model-based approaches are a useful tool to improve the accuracy of the index, namely standardize the index along the time series, taking into account the interannual variability induced by environmental scenarios that could affect the accessibility of BFT schools to aerial observation. The latter is done following the general criteria for indices standardization recently approved by the SCRS Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods (WGSAM) (ICCAT. [2023](#), [2024](#)).

Consequently, the SCRS BFT Species Group Intersessional Meeting, during its April 2025 meeting (ICCAT. [2025](#)), explicitly recommended that further work towards the standardization of GBYP aerial surveys index time series be developed in 2025 to improve the available time series, particularly for the aerial surveys in Balearic Sea, by modelling the effects of environmental factors on the accessibility of BFT schools to aerial sighting similarly to what has been already done in relation to the Gulf of Lions French aerial survey ([Rouyer et al., 2025](#)).

Therefore, the current Call has two objectives:

Analyse the 2025 GBYP Balearic Sea aerial survey data following the same methodology used in previous years, which corresponds to a strict update using the same detection function and following the same design-based approach, in order to update the time series of index of BFT Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock relative spawning stock biomass and abundance currently used within the framework of the BFT stock management.

Reanalyse the available GBYP aerial survey time series (2010-2025) for the Balearic Sea area, applying a model-based approach in such a way that the standardized index (spawning stock biomass and abundance) take into account the variability induced by changes in environmental conditions.



This Call for Tenders is therefore aimed at private or public entities for the submission of proposals to carry out the full project, detailed below.

2. Contractor tasks (TORs)

The Contractor will provide a final comprehensive report, on:

- a) the analyses of all the 2025 GBYP Balearic Sea aerial survey data carrying out the same design-based approach already applied in previous surveys, aiming at producing a strict update of the GBYP aerial survey index of relative spawning stock biomass and abundance time series.
- b) the reanalysis of the Balearic Sea GBYP aerial survey time series following a model-based approach aiming at the interannual standardization of the index values.

The Task b) should include the following steps:

- identify relevant environmental variables influencing the distribution and detectability of BFT spawners in the considered area, and then compiling and process them for the considered period (2010-2025), at the adequate spatial scale to match the aerial survey observations (transect subsegments). Focus should be on factors that affect the spatial, temporal or depth or temperature related detectability by the survey.
- estimate the response variables necessary to apply a model-based approach to the considered series (detection probabilities, observed biomasses or abundances by transect subsegments).
- design a model following the requirements of the SCRS BFT Species Group for indices standardization and criteria established by the SCRS WGSAM.
- standardize the available abundance/biomass index time series using this model, accounting for the environmental influence on the index values across years.

The base data, provided by ICCAT will be previously checked and corrected if necessary (this may require clarification from ICCAT).

Funding for Task b) remains subject to approval. Accordingly, Tenderers are required to submit separate budgets for Task a) and Task b). At the time of contract award, the successful Tenderer will be informed which task(s) have been awarded.

3. Deliverables

#1 A draft final report will be submitted by **10 December 2025** at the latest, and will include the following:

- A detailed description of the methodology followed to carry out the analyses.
- The results from these analyses.
- The processed data files used to carry out the final analyses.

#2 The final report, to be prepared taking into account any comments provided by the GBYP, will be submitted by **18 December 2025**, at the latest.



4. Contractor minimum qualifications

- ☒ Documented experience in aerial survey design and analyses; previous experience in aerial surveys for tuna species will be preferred.
- ☒ Documented experience in distance aerial surveys data analyses methodology.
- ☒ PhD or University degree in biological, natural, environmental or fishery sciences or related fields.
- ☒ Excellent working knowledge of one of the three official languages of ICCAT (English, French, Spanish). Sound knowledge of English is highly desirable.

5. Request for proposals

Interested expert(s) should submit a proposal **ONLY** to the attention of ICCAT Executive Secretary, [Mr. Camille Jean Pierre Manel](#), with copy to [Ms. Stasa Tensek](#) by **12 September 2025, 13:00 Madrid time**, including:

- a) Acknowledgment of this Call for Tenders.
- b) A detailed proposal, based on the TORs of this Call for Tenders. Departures from the TORs may be made with detailed justification. It is allowed to present proposals addressed to only one of the tasks.
- c) The *curriculum vitae* of the institution, including the full address.
- d) An estimated total budget for carrying out the work. Being a short-term contract, the budget will be expressed as a lump sum figure. Tenderers must provide separate budgets for Task a) and Task b).
- e) The name, address, and telephone number for contact purposes of the expert(s).
- f) The bank account of the expert/entity (bank name, account number, IBAN and SWIFT codes) and, if applicable, the VAT/TAX identification code.
- g) A declaration that the expert(s) or entity (s) will follow the terms of this Call for Tenders, and/or any approved modifications agreed upon, and the administrative rules specified in the contract.
- h) A declaration that the comments eventually made on the draft final report (**Deliverable #1**) will be incorporated into the final report (**Deliverable #2**).
- i) A declaration that the expert(s) or entity(s) is covered by full insurance for the work to be carried out according to this Call for Tenders, excluding ICCAT from all responsibility concerning the work to be performed.
- j) A statement specifying the extent of agreement with all terms, conditions, and provisions included herein, particularly specifying the date for providing the draft final report (**Deliverable #1**) and the final report (**Deliverable #2**).

The Contractor should be available to attend and report to any meeting requested by ICCAT; these costs will be paid on the basis of an addendum to the contract.

6. Payment details

Taking into account the schedule for carrying out the work, disbursements will be made according to the following schedule:

1. 50% of the total amount of the contract upon **signature of the contract** and after receiving a regular invoice, which may be submitted at the latest 30 days after the signature of the contract;



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2. 50% after the approval of **Deliverable #2** upon addressing comments by ICCAT; and after receiving a regular invoice and the complete set of documents concerning the expenses incurred under the contract, no later than **18 December 2025**.

7. Selection of proposals

The ICCAT Secretariat will review the offer(s). Following the review 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.

The proposal(s) will be evaluated against a pre-determined set of criteria, which include: (i) cost; (ii) proven track record; (iii) technical merit based on work plan; and (iv) flexibility in relation to future changes to requirements.

8. 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. All documents submitted must be in English, French or Spanish.

9. Copyright

All the material produced by the Contractor within the scope of this Call for Tenders will remain the property of GBYP for the uses of GBYP and may not, in any case, be distributed by the Contractor. Scientific use of the data provided under this Call for Tenders by the Contractor will always be notified to ICCAT in advance.

For further information concerning this Call for Tenders, please contact the GBYP Coordinator, [Dr. Francisco Alemany](#).