

## ICCAT SMALL TUNAS YEAR RESEARCH PROGRAMME (SMTYP)

### Programme objectives

The status of small tuna stocks in the ICCAT Convention area is generally unknown. Nevertheless, these species have a high socio-economic relevance for a considerable number of local communities at the regional level, which depend on landings of these species for their livelihoods.

Fisheries statistics and biological data, which can provide a basis for assessing these resources thus providing the Commission with appropriate scientific advice for their sustainable exploitation, are generally incomplete and not updated for these species.

The ICCAT Year Research Programme for Small Tunas (SMTYP) was adopted by the SCRS in 2011 and approved by ICCAT during its 2012 annual meeting in Agadir (Morocco). The main objectives of the programme at short term are the recovery of historical series of Task I and Task II data and collecting the biological data for the main species of small tunas.

This programme has a wide geographical sampling coverage:

- Mediterranean and Black Sea: bullet tuna, Atlantic bonito, little tunny and plain bonito;
- West Africa: Atlantic bonito, little tunny, tuna, West African Spanish mackerel, frigate tuna, wahoo;
- Caribbean Sea and south-west Atlantic: blackfin tuna, king mackerel and Serra Spanish mackerel and dolphinfish.

### 2015 Activities

To implement the main activities scheduled in 2015, in particular continuing the recovery of historical Task I and Task II data series and conducting the biological sampling for the main small tunas' species, a draft call for tenders was sent to the Secretariat in February 2015. After discussing the proposal with the SCRS Chair, the Secretariat decided to postpone the call for tenders, until the Group would define the priority stocks to be covered by the biological sampling during its data preparatory meeting that took place in June 2015. Furthermore, during the small tuna data preparatory meeting the Secretariat asked the members of the Group that desire participating in the biological sampling activities to be organized within a consortium to better achieve the objectives of the programme and facilitate the administrative procedures related to the contract to be granted to the consortium. As there was not enough time during that meeting to discuss about the details of this possible consortium, this matter has been delayed to next year.

Following a request from the Group in the 2014 SCRS meeting, in May 2015 the Japanese project for capacity building (JCAP/ICCAT) financed a training course on the identification of species and the biological sampling of small tunas. Ten (10) scientists from eight (8) CPCs of North West Africa (Algeria, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia) attended this workshop. This training was of great importance for the participants who significantly improved their knowledge in terms of species identification and biological sampling and estimation methodologies of the biological parameters according to ICCAT recommendations. This basic course would allow the participants to conduct the biological sampling activities planned within the SMTYP.

### *Activities planned for 2016*

In 2016, it is planned to continue the recovery of historical Task I and Task II data of small tunas in other areas: West Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea. This reinforcement of data mining would be necessary to improve the Task I and Task II necessary for the stock assessment of small tunas.

It is also highly recommended to launch collecting biological data and samples, including the size data for the main species in the whole Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, these objectives could not be achieved without financial support from ICCAT. **Table 1** shows the estimated costs related to the activities planned for 2016.

### Budget for 2015 and expenditures

There was no activities carried out in 2015 because of the reasons explained above (2015 Activities), so the total budget available for the SMTYP, which is €60.000,00 is still available to cover about 50% of the expenditures expected for 2016 (**Table 1**).

### Budget for 2016 and expected expenditures

To implement all the activities planned within SMTYP in 2016, an additional budget about €60,000.00 is needed from ICCAT or other financial resources. The details of costs related to activities to be carried out in 2016 are shown in the **Table 1**.

**Table 1.** Estimated costs related to activities planned for 2016 under the ICCAT SMTYP.

<i>Planned activities</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>Estimated costs (€)</i>
1. Recovery Task I and Task II data:  - Eastern Mediterranean: EU-Greece, Turkey - Central Mediterranean: EU-Italy, Tunisia - Western Mediterranean: EU-Spain - South West Atlantic & Caribbean Sea: Brazil, Venezuela - East Atlantic: Mauritania	Atlantic bonito (BON) Little tunny (LTA) King mackerel (KGM) Frigate tuna (FRI) Bullet tuna (BLT)	€15,000 €15,000 €7,500 €15,000 €7,500
2. Supporting biological sampling in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean: size and biological data:  - Senegal - Côte d'Ivoire - Morocco - Mauritania - Tunisia - Algeria - Venezuela - Mexico - Cabo Verde - EU (Spain and Portugal)	Atlantic bonito (BON) Little tunny (LTA) King mackerel (KGM) Frigate tuna (FRI) Bullet tuna (BLT)	€7,500 €7,500 €7,500 €7,500 €7,500 €7,500 €7,500 €7,500 €7,500 €15,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>€142,500</b>