



Madrid, 25 May 2017

ICCAT GBYP CIRCULAR # 850/ 17

**SUBJECT: CALL FOR TENDERS – ICCAT GBYP 07/2017
TAGGING PROGRAMME 2017
ATLANTIC-WIDE RESEARCH PROGRAMME ON BLUEFIN TUNA
(ICCAT GBYP PHASE 7)**

I have the honour to transmit to you the attached Call for Tenders – ICCAT GBYP 07/2017 - Tagging Programme 2017 Atlantic-Wide Research Programme on Bluefin Tuna (ICCAT GBYP – Phase 7).

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.



Driss Meski
Executive Secretary

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Attachment: Call for Tenders GBYP 07/2017.

CALL FOR TENDERS ICCAT GBYP 07/2017
TAGGING PROGRAMME 2017
ATLANTIC-WIDE RESEARCH PROGRAMME ON BLUEFIN TUNA
(ICCAT GBYP – PHASE 7)

SUMMARY OF ICCAT/GBYP

The main objectives of the ICCAT Atlantic-Wide Bluefin Tuna Research Programme (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. However, currently almost all the data used in stock assessments are obtained from the fisheries-dependent data. It is therefore important to obtain data from alternative sources, such as tagging studies, in order to verify the assumptions made when conducting the assessments.

This Call for Tenders concerns the second part of one of the main activities of the GBYP to be carried out in Phase 7 (July-November 2017), the tagging programme 2017, as it was recommended by the GBYP Steering Committee, with a series of various tagging activities.

SECOND PART OF THE GBYP TAGGING PROGRAMME 2017

One of the major research tasks under the ICCAT Atlantic-wide Research Programme on Bluefin Tuna (GBYP) is to carry out a large, wide and intensive scientific tagging programme to address several important biological and ecological topics regarding Atlantic bluefin tuna as well as to possibly provide independent estimates of abundance and/or fishing mortality rates. This particular call is for carrying out the second part of the field tagging activities in 2016, not in agreement with the ICCAT GBYP Tagging Design approved in 2011, but following the recommendation by the GBYP Steering Committee which limited all tagging activities in 2017 to the electronic tagging, focusing the attention for the second part of the tagging on: a) the Portuguese traps, where bluefin tuna moving into the Atlantic after spawning can be tagged, and b) the Strait of Messina (central Mediterranean Sea), where tagging activities on “resident tunas” were carried out in 2016.

The second part of the tagging activity in 2017 shall include the deployment of a maximum of 40 miniPATs, to be implanted in the two above mentioned areas only on bluefin tuna adults. Ideally biological samples of the tagged tunas shall be collected during the tagging activities, to help genetic characterization of the fish tagged in the various areas. An experienced coordinator shall be assigned in each offer; if a tender submits offers for more than one area, the tagging coordinator shall be responsible for monitoring the activities in all these areas. This coordinator shall maintain close communication with the ICCAT GBYP Coordination team. He/she shall coordinate all the activities within the same offer, such as selecting and training the tagging teams, monitoring the related field activities, i.e. supervising the teams involved, the operating tasks of the fishing vessels/traps and their crews, and supervise data handling and processing. Ultimately, the coordinator shall be responsible for providing all the tagging data for input into the ICCAT tagging database, and collection and delivery of the biological samples taken during the tagging activities to the designated lab as directed by the GBYP Coordinator.

Scientific institutes, *ad hoc* consortia, and public or private entities are asked to submit tenders for carrying out the second part of 2017 tagging programme. Each tender can bid for tagging in all, one or more geographical areas.

Background and objectives of the GBYP tagging programme

Many assumptions used in previous bluefin tuna stock assessments, such as stock structure and natural mortality, have been called into question by recent studies. The ICCAT GBYP also included an Aerial Survey and therefore knowledge about behaviour that influences sighting probability, such as vertical habitat utilisation and movement between survey areas, is important in deriving indices of abundance. The mixing between the bluefin tuna management units, the potential existence of meta-populations or the remaining of bluefin tuna wintering in some important spawning areas are important issues to be considered. A well-designed tagging programme, developed over a schedule of several years and with a progressive methodological approach, will therefore be important in improving the understanding of bluefin tuna ecology and ethology and for developing better stock assessment methods.

The specific objectives of the GBYP tagging activity in the medium term (according to the ICCAT GBYP Tagging Design) are:

- a) Validation of the current stock status definitions for populations of bluefin tuna in the Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea. If the hypothesis of two stock units (western and eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stocks) holds, the data collected by the tags should allow estimating mixing rates between stock units by area and time strata (ICCAT main area definitions and quarter at least). It is also important to consider possible sub-stock units and their mixing or population biomass exchange, particularly in the Mediterranean Sea.
- b) Estimation of biological parameters such as growth, natural mortality rates (M) of bluefin tuna populations by age or age-groups, possibly provide fishery independent estimates of abundance, etc.
- c) Estimation of tagging reporting rates for conventional tags, by major fishery and area, also using the observer programmes currently deployed in the Mediterranean fisheries (ICCAT ROP-BFT).
- d) Evaluation of habitat utilization and large-scale movement patterns (spatio-temporal) of both juveniles and spawners.
- e) Estimation of the retention rate of various tag types, due to contrasting experiences in various oceans.
- f) Estimation of the feasibility of tagging bluefin tunas in traps and purse seiners by divers while obtaining reliable size estimates.

The ICCAT GBYP Steering Committee in 2015 recommended concentrating all efforts on electronic tagging to provide additional data to improve our knowledge of bluefin tuna behavior, specifically vertical and horizontal movements, so as to better define its habitats. For a reference on techniques for tagging bluefin tuna see: The ICCAT GBYP [Tagging Manual](#).

Proposals that depart from the design specifications presented in the Call for Tenders should justify the reasons for that departure and how their alternative design may still achieve the objectives of the second part of the ICCAT GBYP tagging programme for 2017.

In-kind contribution provided by the tenderer can be used to partially offset the cost of the tagging programme.

Contractor tasks

The Contractor(s), who will work in close consultation with the ICCAT GBYP Coordination, will conduct the tagging activity in the specified geographical areas and on adult bluefin tuna only.

Although ICCAT Recommendation 11-06 provides the means to ensure that coastal countries, all of which are ICCAT CPCs, will facilitate tagging activities within the waters of their national jurisdiction and in international waters, the tenderer will be responsible for all necessary permits and agreements with the appropriate authorities, when carrying out tagging within national jurisdictions. The necessary electronic tags will be provided by the ICCAT GBYP to the awarded tenderer(s).

The Contractor(s) shall be responsible for the basic data management and for the 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 shall be reported to ICCAT with the appropriate tagging forms.

The budget available at ICCAT for the second part of tagging activity in 2017 is considered sufficient to support the release of at least 40 miniPATs on the basis of the tagging designs previously considered by ICCAT. In the case that the cost of the selected tender exceeds that budgeted by the GBYP, ICCAT may negotiate a smaller number of released fish with the proponent of the tender.

This contract is for the period up to December 2017, even if it is supposed that almost all activities will be completed before the end of November.

Detail of the areas and numbers of fish to be tagged and released in each area

The Contractor(s) shall provide one or more proposals to achieve the ICCAT GBYP Phase 7 objectives for the second part of the tagging programme 2017, for each of the following areas:

A) Electronic tagging of adult bluefin tunas in Portuguese traps in the eastern Atlantic Ocean

Offers under GBYP Tagging 07/2017 item A shall ensure the following:

- a) A minimum of 20 miniPATs are sought to be implanted during this tagging trial; a team of specialists shall be made available for tagging these fish according to the protocols adopted by the ICCAT GBYP in previous Phases; these electronic pop-up tags will be set for the longest possible time frame; the miniPATs will be provided by the ICCAT GBYP, along with precise instructions.
- b) The time frame for tagging shall be July 2017 to September 2017.
- c) The area shall be the eastern Atlantic Ocean, off the southern Portuguese coast where traps are actively fishing.
- d) Tuna trap shall be the fishing gear to be used for tagging. The trap time available for this tagging activity shall be set at a minimum of two weeks. Any complimentary trap time should be clearly mentioned in the offer.
- e) Adult tunas shall be tagged by divers directly underwater; each fish shall be tagged by a diver using a pole or a calibrated speargun; in the case that the previously mentioned tagging tool is not equipped with an underwater stereoscopic camera, a second diver shall be deployed equipped with a video recording system with a laser system that is able to estimate more precisely the length of each individual tagged fish. The methodology for tagging should be the one reported by [Mariani *et al.*, 2015](#) with the improvements reported by [Mariani *et al.*, 2016](#), since this approach was considered the best by the SCRS Bluefin Tuna Species Group; speargun can be substituted with a pole. The sequence of tags, pictures and laser estimates shall be properly recorded for future use and controls, while the number of each tag and the length estimate shall be properly recorded on the ICCAT forms. Divers shall be hired by the tendering entity. Alternatively, tagging might be carried out on board the trap vessel, by pulling the tunas from the trap using divers and releasing them immediately after tagging.
- f) Possibly carry out biological sampling during the tagging activities; biological samples must be collected from the same school of fish, possibly from the same tagged fish if the tagger will be properly equipped; if sampling the tagged fish is not possible, samples shall be collected from other fish in the same school. Sampling shall be conducted according to the protocols adopted by the Contractor(s) in charge of the biological and genetic sampling and analyses; the samples shall be shipped to the laboratory in charge.
- g) A Coordinator for tagging activities who has specific experience in electronic tagging on tunas; this tagging Coordinator could be hired on a short-term contract. The Tagging Coordinator, who would work in close, constant contact with the ICCAT GBYP Coordination team, shall be responsible for directly managing all field activities, the scientific teams on board, and their training and monitoring; due to the key importance of this figure, the Terms of Reference for this position are provided in **Annex 1**.
- h) A scientific team for each trap with short-term contracts. This team shall take care of registering all tags and necessary data on the ICCAT forms. The team shall also include a specialist in electronic tagging. The total time at sea should be an average minimum of two (2) weeks per person/trap, with some additional time for any training and travel.
- i) All necessary permits for accessing and operating in the waters under the jurisdiction of the CPC concerned.

- j) It shall be necessary to further implement cooperative agreements with ICCAT ROP or national observers at domestic bluefin tuna farm installations and traps to ensure complete tag reporting and recovery of any tagged fish

B) Electronic tagging of adult bluefin tunas by hand line in the Strait of Messina (central Mediterranean Sea)

Offers under GBYP Tagging 07/2017 item B shall ensure the following:

- a) A minimum of 10 miniPATs should be implanted in the Strait of Messina (Central Mediterranean Sea) on adult bluefin tunas, which remained in the Mediterranean after the spawning season; these electronic pop-up tags will be set for the longest possible time frame; the applicators and the miniPATs will be provided by the ICCAT GBYP, along with precise instructions.
- b) The time-frame for tagging shall be set from the beginning of September and up to the end of November, after the end of the usual spawning season and when fishing activities should be over, with no changes admitted regarding the tagging period;
- c) Hand line shall be the fishing gear to be used for catching the bluefin tunas, while a boat should be used for moving the tagging team within the area of the Strait; the total number of boats shall be sufficient for reaching the final objective. Any in-kind boat time provided should be clearly mentioned in the offer. The final invoice shall cover the costs that was necessary for deploying all tags.
- d) Adult tunas shall be tagged along the side of the boat by expert taggers, possibly removing the hook which was used for fishing them. Tagging operations shall be carried out following the methodology reported in the ICCAT GBYP Tagging Manual. The sequence of tags, pictures and size measures shall be properly recorded for future uses and controls, while the number of each tag and the total straight fork length measure shall be properly recorded on the ICCAT forms.
- e) A conventional tag shall be implanted on the dorsal part of each fish tagged with electronic tags; conventional tags will be provided by ICCAT GBYP.
- f) Carry out biological sampling during the tagging activities; biological samples must be collected from the same tagged fish. Sampling shall be conducted according to the protocols adopted by the contractor(s) in charge of the biological studies; the samples shall be shipped to the laboratory in charge.
- g) A Coordinator for tagging activities who has specific experience in electronic tagging on tunas; this tagging Coordinator could be hired under a short-term contract. The Tagging Coordinator, who would work in close, constant contact with the ICCAT GBYP Coordination team, shall be responsible for directly managing all field activities, the scientific teams on board, and their training and monitoring; due to the key relevance of this figure, the Terms of Reference for this position are provided in **Annex 1**.
- h) A tagging team; the team should possibly include at least an electronic tagging specialist with demonstrated experience and any additional scientific staff.
- i) All necessary permits for accessing and operating in the waters under the jurisdiction of each CPC concerned.

The Tenderer(s) should endeavor to follow the tagging guidelines indicated in the ICCAT GBYP Tagging Manual as they relate to the task(s) included in the offer. Proposals including entities across geographic areas and tasks are preferred. In the case of a consortium or group of entities, an administrative and a scientific responsible entity should be identified; if the consortium includes more than five entities, then a Scientific Committee shall be included on which each entity carrying out a scientific duty will be represented. The Tenderer(s) can optionally apply for specific task or sub-set of areas/coverage with a detailed description of the modifications and proposal research. Each proposed modification of any of the terms detailed for each objective of the tagging programme (A and B) shall be justified.

Sub-contracts can be admitted up to a limit of 40% of the total budget and they shall be detailed in the proposal.

Contractor minimum qualifications

- Documented multi-year experience in bluefin tuna or tuna-species studies; previous experience in large-scale tagging or local multi-year tagging will be preferred.
- Availability of sufficient qualified scientific and technical staff to carry out the duties.
- Availability of the necessary vessel(s)/trap(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 **only** to the attention of Mr. Driss Meski, the Executive Secretary of ICCAT, at the following address: driss.meski@iccat.int by **18 June 2017**, including:

- a) Acknowledgment of this Call for Tenders (**ICCAT GBYP 07/2017**).
- b) A detailed offer, based on the objectives of this Call for Tenders (A to B), clearly specifying the objective(s) for which the tender is submitted, describing the strata where the tagging will be conducted, the minimum number of bluefin tuna to be tagged, the protocols to be adopted, and the structure of the data bank, for the purpose of the draft final report (**Deliverable #3**) and the final report (**Deliverable #4**).
- c) The curricula of the scientific staff.
- d) The curriculum of the institution(s) or entity(ies) applying for the ICCAT GBYP tagging activity 2016, 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) A preliminary estimated budget for the tagging activity and for including the data into the ICCAT tagging database, to be detailed by individual components (e.g., tagging staff, organization staff including the time for data input, vessel rent, trap costs, operational costs, travels, consumables, etc.) and any discount terms (overhead to cover administrative and general costs could be admitted within a maximum limit of 10% of the personnel costs).
- f) The name, address, and telephone number of the tendering body.
- g) The bank account of the tendering body, (bank name, account number, IBAN and SWIFT codes), and the IVA=VAT 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 sub-contracting activities.
- j) A declaration that the offering institution will follow the *Tagging Manual* as well as the present 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 #3**) will be incorporated in the final (**Deliverable #4**) 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 #3**) and the date for the final report (**Deliverable #4**).

The ICCAT Secretariat will make a selection of the offers in consultation with the ICCAT GBYP Steering Committee. The ICCAT Secretariat will notify the result of the selection process as soon as possible.

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 institution, such as government or private laboratories, universities, or private consultancy firms, or individual scientists or other entities having the qualifications required.

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

Deliverables

#1 A short report on tagging activities, including the identification of the tagging coordinator, all protocols for tagging, the vessel chartering agreements or the trap availability and the short description of the work carried out up to that date, to be submitted at the latest **30 days after the signature of the contract**.

#2 An update of the short report on the activities to be submitted at the latest by **20 September 2017**, including the description of the work carried out up to that date, the number of tagged tunas in the various areas by tag type, the number of biological samples collected at the date.

#3 The draft final report to be submitted at the latest by **14 December 2017**, including comments on:

- I. The scientific report, taking into account the relevant scientific literature, containing:
 - a) Full description of the work carried out for the tagging activities in the various areas, with the total number of tagged tunas and specification of any double tagged tuna;
 - b) Detailed description of the methodology and protocols;
 - c) Maps of the areas in which the tagging was carried out;
 - d) Detailed tables with the definitive number of tagged specimens by area, size composition and type of tag (miniPATs or miniPATs + conventional spaghetti tag);
 - e) Copy of the data input worksheets from the ICCAT tagging database;
 - f) Any possible recommendations for adjusting the tagging strategy for conventional tagging in future Phases of ICCAT GBYP;
 - g) An Executive Summary.
- II. A PowerPoint presentation of the main results.

#4 The final report, to be prepared taking into account any comments provided by ICCAT, and the full administrative report including copies of all the administrative documents, to be submitted by **28 December 2017**, at the latest.

To facilitate the reporting requirements, the ICCAT GBYP could possibly provide a template for the reports.

Payment details

Disbursements will be made according to the following schedule:

1. 30% of the total amount of the contract upon **signing of the contract**;
2. 25% upon completion and acceptance of **Deliverable #1**;
3. 25% upon completion and acceptance of **Deliverable #2**;
4. 20% after the approval of **Deliverable #4** upon incorporation of comments by the ICCAT GBYP and the approval of the administrative documents.

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 shall be input into the ICCAT tagging database. All documents submitted must be in English, French or Spanish.

Copyright

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

For further information concerning this Call for Tenders, please contact the ICCAT GBYP Coordinator at the following address: antonio.dinatale@iccat.int

Duties and Responsibilities of the Tagging Coordinator

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

- Be the liaison officer between the Contractor and the ICCAT GBYP for all practical issues concerning the tagging activities;
- Selection and training of the staff engaged in the tagging programme at sea, organising the necessary training course;
- Implement the logistical and operational components of the tag release activities, including cruise planning (for purse seiners), tagger training and supervision of all aspects of the operational releases;
- Participate in tagging cruises, acting as cruise leader;
- Ensure that all data collected as part of the release activities of tags under the ICCAT GBYP are properly recorded, transcribed in electronic form and provided to GBYP and to the ICCAT tagging data manager;
- Ensure the collection of all biological samples requested by the contract (only for those samples to be collected during the tagging activities) and ensure their delivery to the team (s) in charge of the biological studies, according to the sampling protocols specified;
- Possibly support the Contractor for vessel chartering, contracting staff for tagging operations and while purchasing any of the gears required to implement properly the tagging programme;
- Prepare written reports, as required, summarizing all tag release and recovery activities and also, in strict cooperation with the ICCAT GBYP Coordination team, draft articles describing the GBYP tagging programme for promotional purposes (a preliminary draft shall be sent to ICCAT for clearance);
- Possibly support the Contractor in preparing all necessary documents for requesting the permits for accessing the national waters under the jurisdiction of each CPC concerned (to be formally requested by the Contractor), informing the ICCAT GBYP Coordination team of any need for assistance and/or support;
- In collaboration with the ICCAT GBYP Coordination team, implement tag promotional and recovery activities including those specifically recommended by the GBYP Steering Committee. This will possibly entail extensive travel to major bluefin landing ports and direct liaison with the fishing industry and scientists involved in bluefin fisheries.
- Other activities, as required, to ensure the successful implementation of the ICCAT GBYP tagging programme;
- Work in constant, close cooperation with the ICCAT GBYP Coordination team, keeping them informed of all the details, any possible difficulties, and progress made.