

ICCAT GBYP Steering Committee Meeting – Phase 7

07-08 March 2017

REPORT

The meeting of the GBYP Steering Committee (SC) was held at the ICCAT Secretariat in Madrid on 07-08 March 2017, with the participations of the SC members David Die (SCRS Chair), Gary Melvin (W-BFT Rapporteur), Ana Gordoia (E-BFT Rapporteur) and Miguel Nieves dos Santos (delegated by Driss Meski, ICCAT Executive Secretary). Clay Porph (SCRS ABFT Chair), Antonio Di Natale (GBYP Coordinator), Alfonso Pagá García (GBYP Database Specialist) and Stasa Tensek (GBYP Assistant Coordinator) joined the meeting, invited by the Steering Committee.

The tentative agenda, as proposed by the GBYP Coordinator (**Annex 1**) was approved and each SC member was provided with the copy of the approved budget for the Phase 7 (**Annex 2**).

Stasa Tensek was appointed as rapporteur.

1. Refinement of the activities of the Phase 7

a) Data recovery

Due to limitation in the budget, it was decided to give priorities to those activities which will provide more important data for the stock assessment. Although by definition the data recovery would comprehend giving priority to the recovery of the historical data, the recent data provide more valuable input for the stock assessment. Therefore, it was decided to give priorities to the activities in the following order: 1. recovery of recent LL data from Italy; 2. recovery of Norwegian PS data; 3. recovery of the historical trap data. The LL data should be provided as soon as possible in order for them to be available for the purposes of this year stock assessment.

It was noted that the recent data should be provided in a mandatory way within the scope of the data collection scheme without the need to pay for them apart. It was noted that this was discussed and analysed in 2013 and a *pro-veritate* opinion was made available. It was decided to raise this problem on the next meeting of the SCRS and in the future try to obtain these type of data free of charge. Also, it was proposed to ask the European Commission to make a specific data call for the BFT data collected under the EU Data Collection Framework, for providing them to the SCRS if they were not provided so far.

b) Aerial survey

It was acknowledged that the aerial survey results cannot be used for the purpose of stock assessment this year, even though they can be available in July. Nevertheless, they might be used in the future assessments, if the BFT species group decides so and if a longer series will be available. It was recalled that EU, the mayor GBYP fund provider, required to carry out the aerial survey activities in 2017 for the purpose of developing a fisheries independent index which would be used in the stock assessment and the concern was raised that its expectations will not be fulfilled. It was decided to communicate to the EU that although the data will not be used for the purposes of the assessment this year, they will be considered in the MSE process for conditioning the OM and they will be anyway available to the SCRS as an indicator.

Regarding the aerial survey calibration exercises, it was acknowledged that it will not be possible to rotate the observers, but it was discussed if other type of calibration might be possible. It was decided

to try a specific desk exercise this year, which would possibly provide the assessment of the individual detection capabilities of each spotter/scientific observer. This exercise might be done during the workshop prior to aerial survey, showing the observers slides with known number of dots and asking them to determine the number of dots or can be done after the aerial survey using the real photos of bluefin schools observers will take this year. In theory, it might be possible to correct the assessment of the number of tunas in the school and their weight assessed by the observers if the bias introduced by each observer is constant and known. Therefore, this tentative exercise might give insight if the individual bias of each observer tends to be constant and therefore the individual correction factor might be developed for the statistic correction of the estimates.

c) Biological studies

The number of adult BFT samples that will be obtained from the farms in the Phase 7 was discussed. Even if the budget is limited, it was decided to go for 1200 samples in the same areas as in the previous year. The proposal for sampling in Lebanon was considered interesting but it was rejected, given the fact that Lebanon is not an ICCAT CPC and that the samples from the Levantine Sea are provided anyway from Turkey. It was decided to continue collecting juvenile samples through the contract for Biological studies.

Regarding biological analyses, it was decided to suspend the otolith shape analysis, given the fact that the results it provides are not relevant for determining the origin of the fish and therefore neither for determining the amount of mixing. It was also decided to focus the analyses on the samples from the Atlantic this year and to suspend the analyses on the samples from the Mediterranean or the Gulf of Mexico. In addition, it was decided to make the analysis of otolith microconstituents of ~200 samples collected in Norway.

As for the aging, Gary Melvin offered that the Fisheries and Oceans Laboratory provide about 700 otolith readings. It might be done free of charge and without the contract. Regarding the readings of the rest of the otoliths, it was agreed that the potential laboratories be identified, that have a previous experience in tuna otoliths readings and to contact them individually to find out if they would be interested and what price they would charge. It must be included in the future contract that the otoliths aren't destroyed after reading (the otolith core must be saved) and that they are returned to the GBYP tissue base. Prior to the readings, there must be an established protocol that ensures the quality control on an annual basis and ensures that the comparison with previous readings is below the maximum established level of CV. An aging calibration should be tried again in Phase 7.

Ana Gordoia proposed to send YOY otoliths to the Laboratory of CSIS to find if it is available and capable of reading of daily rings.

d) Tagging

The Steering Committee recognized the lack of a clear design for choosing the location for the deployment of electronic tags, but it has also acknowledged the logistical and budget constraints that prevent their deployment in some suitable locations. For the purpose of feeding the MSE and the OM model in the terms of the complementing gaps in movement matrices, it was decided to focus in the Phase 7 on the locations where electronic tagging hasn't been done so far.

Consequently, it was decided to try to deploy the already available ~70 electronic tags in 3 locations in Northern Atlantic (Ireland, Sweden and Norway), if the budget allows for it. The early publishing of call for tenders is critical in order to assess the costs connected to the deployment of tags on each location and use any possible residual funds in other areas (i.e. southern Portugal and/or Strait of

Messina) or activities. If the budget doesn't allow for the deployment in all of these locations, the priorities will be modified accordingly.

e) Modelling

Although the position of the modelling communicator has already been foreseen in the Phase 7, it was recalled that the Core Modelling and MSE Group on its last meeting came out with a modified proposal. David Die committed to communicate with the Group with the purpose to come with the clear agreement about the terms of reference for either a communicator, or the other position envisaged by the Group.

Regarding the expert assistant for the BFT assessment, it was recognized that it was not possible to identify the expert yet because all those already contacted have rejected the position due to other commitments. It was decided that the list of suitable candidates be expanded and communicated to Miguel Neves dos Santos who will contact them. Additionally, the BFT Species Group Chairs committed to ask the participants of the Data Preparatory Meeting for an advice on suitable candidates.

It was agreed to postpone the decision on the Core Modelling MSE Group Meeting and the workshop, depending on the needs in following months and the work to be done by the stock assessment experts.

2. Possible candidates for the external member of the SC

It was recognized that Tom Polacheck, the ex-member of the SC, has been very productive and provided valuable inputs for the work of the Steering Committee during his mandate.

It was recalled the work of the SC has been criticised in various occasions and it was suggested that this issue might be solved by contracting two GBYP Steering Committee external experts instead of only one as it was done so far, as it was already recommended the past year. It was recognized that the SC structure was defined by the ICCAT Commission and cannot be changed by SC alone and therefore it was decided to officially address this issue again on the Plenary SCRS meeting this year.

The BFT Species Group Chairs committed to ask the participants of the Data Preparatory Meeting for an advice on suitable candidates for the external member.

Annex 1

ICCAT GBYP STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MADRID, 7 MARCH 2017 DRAFT ANNOTATED AGENDA

1. Refinements of the activities in Phase 7 (we need details before issuing the Calls)

a) Data recovery

- Historical data from traps
- Recent LL data
- Norwegian additional data

b) Aerial survey

- Call for services already issues
- Call for the survey in preparation (4 areas)

c) Biological studies

- Sampling for juveniles as in 2016
- Sampling for adults (decision about the number 1000/1200/1500)
- Additional tentative sampling in Lebanon?
- Analyses mostly concentrated on Atlantic samples
- Additional genetic analyses as discussed
- Additional O isotope as discussed
- Otolith shape Y/N (about 20,000 euro)
- Aging: minimum number of readings? (labs???)
- Aging calibration: Y/N

d) Tagging

- About 70 tags available
- Areas: Strait of Messina (HL), Portugal (Trap), Norway or Sweden or Ireland, other areas?

e) Modelling

- Expert for modelling development (TORs)
- Communicator
- Core Modelling MSE Group meeting
- Workshop?
- Expert Assistance for ASS?

2. Possible candidates for the external member of the SC

Annex 2

BUDGET AND ACTIONS FOR ICCAT-GBYP PHASE 7						
ACTIONS		ALLOCATION	PHASE 7 PROPOSAL		CHANGES BY THE SC	
Phase 7	EU		detail	total Phase 7	detail	total Phase 7
A		Coordination		357.985,00 €		- €
A.1	1.1.1	ICCAT staff	10.000,00 €		- €	
A.2	1.1.2	Coordinator + support staff salaries	280.000,00 €		- €	
A.3	5.1	Travels and subsistence (including SC)	25.000,00 €		- €	
A.4	2.1	Computer hardware and software	2.985,00 €		- €	
A.5	5.2	Consumables and supplies	5.000,00 €		- €	
A.6	3.1	Contracts for external Steering Committee member	15.000,00 €		- €	
A.7	5.3	ICCAT Secretariat overhead	20.000,00 €		- €	
B		Data mining, data retrieval and data elaboration (external contracts)		60.000,00 €		- €
		Data recovery (traps, LL, Norway)	60.000,00 €		- €	
			- €		- €	
			- €		- €	
C		Aerial survey (note 1)		388.000,00 €		- €
C.1	4.2	Design revision, training assistance, real time data checking and real time data analyses	25.000,00 €		- €	
C.2	5.4	Training course	13.000,00 €		- €	
C.3	4.3	Aerial survey activity	350.000,00 €		- €	
D		Tagging		290.000,00 €		- €
D.1	4.4	conventional and electronic tagging	180.000,00 €		- €	
		Tagging Strait of Messina	- €		- €	
		Tagging Portugal	- €		- €	
		Taggin Ireland or Sweden	- €		- €	
		Additional analysis of electronic tag data	- €		- €	
D.3	4.5	Electronic tags & related services	90.000,00 €		- €	
		Conventional tags and applicators	- €		- €	
D.4	5.7	Tag awareness and rewards campaign	20.000,00 €		- €	
		Field awareness campaign	- €		- €	
		Workshop for CSMR	- €		- €	
		Study for close-kin genetic tagging feas. 2nd part	- €		- €	
E		Biological Work (external contracts)		539.000,00 €		- €
E.1	4.6	Sampling for adults	175.000,00 €		- €	
		Additional sampling for YOY	- €		- €	
E.2	4.6	Biological studies (including also aging, and aging calibrations)	364.000,00 €		- €	
		Aging + aging calibration	- €		- €	
		Ageing calibration	- €		- €	
F		Modelling		174.000,00 €		- €
F.1	5.5	Technical meetings/workshop on modelling/MSE	35.000,00 €		- €	
	5.6	Workshop for building modelling capacity	- €		- €	
F.2	4.7	MSE Communicator & travels	40.000,00 €		- €	
		External expert assistance for initial modelling development & travels	83.000,00 €		- €	
F.3	4.8	External expert assistance for DPM and assessment	16.000,00 €		- €	
F.4	4.9					
		Total revised reduced minimum budget		1.808.985,00 €		- €