

ICCAT-GBYP STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT

Madrid, 28-29 September 2013

1. Opening of the meeting

The GBYP Steering Committee (SC) meeting was held at the ICCAT Secretariat on September 28-29, 2013, with the participation of Messrs. Jean-Marc Fromentin, Driss Meski, Tom Polacheck, Clay Porch and Josu Santiago. Messrs. M'Hamed Idrissi (GBYP Assistant Coordinator) and Antonio Di Natale (GBYP Coordinator), from the ICCAT Secretariat, also attended the meeting.

All reports concerning the activities done in Phase 4 had been circulated to the Steering Committee in advance. Other documents, including the executive summaries of the activities and all information on budget and budget simulation, were distributed several days before the meeting and paper copies were made available at the meeting (see Appendix 3). Each member of the SC signed the conflict of interest forms as agreed in 2011.

The Steering Committee acknowledged the hard work of the Secretariat in 2013 and the efficient labour in preparing the information for the meeting in a very short schedule. The SC also emphasized the importance of the results that are being obtained during the current Phase 4 and acknowledged the professional work done by the teams involved in the different GBYP activities conducted.

Dr. Polacheck, the chair of the meeting, welcomed all the participants. After a short introduction, the Agenda (Appendix 1) was discussed, and the GBYP Coordinator was asked to provide the details on the annotated agenda. Dr. Porch was appointed rapporteur. The following report summarizes points discussed during the Steering Committee meeting.

2. Review of action items from previous meetings

The SC reviewed the list of action items from previous meeting (Appendix 2). It noted the substantial progress made with respect to most items. Outstanding items that were still relevant were referred for discussion to the relevant items in the agenda.

3. Improving Communication within the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee discussed the concerns expressed by some of the members, in particular, the pending Contract for Phase 4 for Biological & Genetic Sampling and Analyses. The Secretariat provided clear explanations to these issues raised. The Steering Committee admitted that miscommunication and misunderstanding had occurred.

There was considerable discussion on the issue of improving communication and functioning of the SC and its interactions with the coordinating staff. Based on this discussion, the SC made several recommendations:

- a. When drafting calls for tenders, the Secretariat and GBYP staff should strive to follow the recommendations of the SC. In cases where the Secretariat and GBYP staff have particular concerns regarding those recommendations (e.g. inconsistencies, lack of specificity, incompleteness or incompatibility with ICCAT Policies), they should pass those concerns on to the SC for further discussion and resolution.
- b. The SC should strive to reach a consensus on all decisions and recommendations. In unusual circumstances where a consensus cannot be achieved, decisions and recommendations should be in accordance with the majority view and the alternative views should be documented.
- c. Recommendations rendered by the SC should be implemented by the Secretariat in accordance with the ICCAT rules of procedure (see bullet a above).
- d. GBYP staff should circulate a monthly report that includes a spreadsheet that tracks the progress of all actions recommended by the SC, including the various calls for tender and corresponding approval of contracts, as well as the progress of awarded contracts towards completion.
- e. The SC should meet more frequently. An annual face-to-face meeting should be held immediately prior to the SCRS species group meetings. In addition, there should be 1 or 2 virtual meetings where the SC can be updated on the progress of the various action items and consulted as necessary.

Another issue concerned the degree to which SC members should participate in discussions with financial implications to projects they are associated with. The ICCAT Secretariat informed the SC that ICCAT policy prohibits the name of a steering committee member from appearing on a contract issued by ICCAT. In addition, the SC agreed that members who are indirectly (or potentially) involved with projects funded by the GBYP should excuse themselves from related financial discussions.

4. Mid-Term Review

The SC discussed the comments provided in the midterm review of the GBYP program. It noted that the document did not fully address the terms of reference, perhaps partly due to the short time frame between the due date and the issuance of the call for tenders. Some concern was also expressed over the fact that two of the three reviewers had a long history with ICCAT and that it might be desirable in the future to place more emphasis on having external reviewers.

The Midterm review provided a list of 35 recommendations, many of which the SC found useful and agreed with, especially the need to better coordinate research conducted by various National programs and the GBYP. Specific responses to comments relevant to the current GBYP work, particularly in Phase 5, are provided in Appendix 4.

5. Summary of the activities in 2012 and recommendations for 2013

5.1 Aerial Survey

The SC noted the extraordinary achievements made by this year's aerial survey, both in terms of improvements in various technical aspects as well as the broad spatial coverage. Nearly the entire Mediterranean Sea was covered except for some airspaces off the southern Mediterranean Sea and central Adriatic Sea.

The SC recommended that the aerial survey should be continued for 2014 (assuming same conditions regarding the ability to obtain flight permits), but noted that the design could be made more cost effective based on what has been learned from 2013 and previous years. In this regard, one of the main difficulties regarding the 2013 aerial surveys was the very short time between the award and the beginning of the flight operations. This difficulty has strong implications for the logistics of the aerial surveys, inducing a lot of flight time for the transfers between airports and for selecting the best-trained spotters. The SC reviewed the recommendations from the Aerial Survey Report. Nevertheless, the SC recommended maintaining broad coverage to ensure the robustness of the survey design to the spatial variability of spawning aggregations. The SC recommended adjustments to the areas that should be surveyed are shown in Figure 1.

It is also recognized that it is important to perform the aerial surveys with the same companies and spotters to the extent possible so as to avoid introducing excessive variations due repetitive changes in spotters. The SC recommends taking into account this issue when selecting the companies that will be awarded. Cost alone should not be the primary consideration; priority should also be given to companies that have already performed aerial surveys for GBYP in the past.

Finally, three specific technical concerns should be addressed for the next survey. First, the problems in the detection function noticed for various companies in the three years in some areas should be better analysed, properly addressing them in future activities. Second, it is important that the protocols for identifying and using secondary (offline) sightings should be reviewed and applied consistently among aircraft/spotters. Third, the estimates of school size should be calibrated among observers. This issue is important because the purpose of the aerial survey is to measure relative spawning biomass, which can change from year to year owing to changes in both the number of schools and the size of schools. In particular, school size estimates are based on the visual examinations of each observer. It is therefore important to calibrate the estimates of school size among different spotters.

The SC reiterated that the aerial survey has the potential to provide an important fishery independent index for the stock assessment, but it will require a long-term and ongoing commitment.

5.2 *Biological sampling*

The Steering Committee was informed of some administrative issues that delayed processing of the contract. Those issues have been discussed and resolved. However, the delay in processing the contract might make it difficult for the Consortium to complete the genetic analyses by the date indicated in the proposal and a delay of about 3 months would be reasonable. It was also noted that the current proposal does not include a component for aging (reading the hard parts sampled). The Steering committee agreed that these samples need to be aged, but noted that it is most important to continue collecting samples and to complete the genetic analyses. Therefore, the SC recommended the proposal be accepted as submitted and to move forward with signing the contract as soon as possible.

The SC noted the ground-breaking work in bringing together so many research institutions in a joint collaborative process. It recognized the difficulties that having so many partners creates in terms of processing and fulfilling short-term contracts. It would be beneficial to explore alternative contractual mechanisms that better accommodate this situation. The SC recommended that the biological sampling be continued at similar levels to those in phase 4.

In addition to continuing the biological sampling, priority should be given in 2014 to establishing a reference collection for otoliths and spines and developing standardized and validated aging techniques. At least 50 otoliths and 50 spines (one otolith and one spine from the same fish), covering a range of sizes, should be prepared and mounted. The SC recommended that funds should be allocated from the GBYP to help sponsor this process, including a workshop, during Phase 5.

The SC recommended supporting the participation of invited experts to a workshop of bluefin tuna larval biology.

5.3 *Tagging*

The SC was apprised of the progress of the various tagging enterprises conducted in Phase 4, including the pilot projects previously recommended. The tagging activities conducted in tuna traps in Morocco and Sardinia, for tagging adults, have been both very positive: the number of tags implanted in Moroccan traps was very close to the target, while tagging in Sardinia was very useful for both testing the cameras and for detecting problems in the applicators when using spear guns. The tagging trial for adult fish caught with purse-seines in the Tyrrhenian Sea was also very useful for refining the technique and identifying essential elements for improving this activity. The tagging trial on juvenile fish in the Adriatic Sea (caught with purse seines, transferred to cages, and caught by handlines) was very successful, both for the total number of implanted tags and for testing the methodology. The baitboat tagging in the Bay of Biscay and in the Strait of Gibraltar, which is still continuing, was also very successful.

The SC recognized the important technical improvements gained by all these trials, and was impressed by the number of new inputs provided by the presentations made during the Bluefin Tuna Species Group by some contractors, showing the commitment and the scientific value of the various teams. The new information will be essential for planning the tagging activities in Phase 5.

Based on the above results, the SC recommended to continue the various tagging enterprises. Depending on the amount of funds available, highest priority should be given to the three pilot studies on adult fish (traps in Morocco and Sardinia and purse seine in the Tyrrhenian Sea) and the tagging of juveniles (ages 1-3) in the Adriatic Sea using purse-seines and cages. The next highest priority should be given to extending the pilot study in the Tyrrhenian Sea for tagging adults to include juveniles. The SC further recommended to continue the tagging and recovery of juveniles (ages 1-3) in the Bay of Biscay and Strait of Gibraltar, respectively. The SC also recommended that further development of novel methods for tagging be encouraged.

The SC also recommended, at a somewhat lower priority than the aforementioned projects, a call for a short-term contract to review the literature on PIT tagging programs and identify the health issues that have arisen, if any, in regards to food safety. This could be funded out of phase 4 if there are sufficient funds (around 10,000 euro).

It was pointed out that several National Scientists in the eastern Mediterranean Sea have recently expressed interest in collaborating on tagging projects for juveniles and adults in that region. In light of this, the SC recommends the GBYP Coordinator explore the feasibility of tagging in the Eastern Mediterranean for Phase 6.

Finally, the SC expressed concern about the varying recovery rates of tags across tuna farms. There is a need to contract several people to liaison with the operators of the cages and traps, as well as with the observers, to disseminate tagging promotional materials and encourage better cooperation in reporting tags. The promotional materials could be the usual posters and notices, but perhaps also video displays of the releases and recoveries to promote interest. At the same time, efforts should be made to provide information to local media.

The SC also recommends that the recovery of tags be formally included as a high priority task for BFT National and ROP observers.

This project could be funded during phase 5, pending sufficient funds are available. The SC requests the GBYP staff to develop appropriate terms of reference.

5.4 Modelling

The SC was informed about the progress in Phase 4. Two contracts were released, one dealing with qualitative risk analysis and another for a review of statistical stock assessment techniques.

The SC discussed the need to move ahead with developing the operating model and management strategy evaluations. The SC agreed with the recommendations from the Bluefin Methods meeting in Gloucester, MA, in that the priority for this year (phase 4) is to develop and implement a detailed multi-annual work plan that includes objectives, deliverables and responsibilities, for presentation at the SCRS for agreement and finalisation (based on the outline established at the 2013 Bluefin Tuna Stock Assessment meeting in Gloucester, Ma). A core modelling steering group should be established to oversee the development and subsequent implementation of the plan, the chair of which should be an external expert contracted for about 3 months per year (beginning in phase 4) to serve as the program coordinator .

The SC recommends that the program Coordinator continue to manage the project in phase 5 and 6 (approximately 3 months per year), assisted by the Secretariat's relevant expertise in modelling. The SC further recommended an external expert be contracted full-time during phase 5 and 6 to develop the computer code and run the operating model based on the mathematical equations and model scenarios recommended by the modeling steering group.

5.5 Data recovery

Two proposals were submitted for data recovery in the remainder of phase 4. The first proposal seeks to recover data from fisheries in Nova Scotia for the period from 1938-1982. The SC agreed to fund this proposal provided some administrative issues can be worked out. The second proposal concerns genetic analyses of samples from Ottoman traps, Lybia, Croatia and the Tyrrhenian Sea collected between 1911 and 1926. The committee noted that this work could improve our general knowledge of Atlantic bluefin tuna and that the results are potentially relevant to the issue of stock structure and how it may change over time (which would support the Management Strategy Evaluation).

5.5 Analysis of Japanese Market Data

The SC reviewed the most recent proposal on ICCAT trade-market data by the Organization for the Promotion of Responsible Tuna Fisheries. The SC recommended going ahead with the proposal for phase 4, provided the tenders include, for all records, flags with codes that designate the reliability of each record based on well-defined criteria. The flag codes should include text describing any differences in opinion among the investigators. The SC recommended that, as part of phase 5, an in-depth analysis of these data should be conducted for producing estimates (including uncertainty) of total catch, size composition, and growth rates in cages.

6. Future of the Atlantic-wide Bluefin Tuna Research Program

The SC discussed the efficacy of the GBYP as it currently exists. It was recognized that the information gained to date will contribute substantially towards improving the next stock assessment and our understanding of bluefin tuna stock structure and population dynamics. Nevertheless, there were a number of challenges that hampered the potential of the program. The SC agreed that a draft document addressing the future of the program should be prepared in advance of the Steering Committee meeting planned for September 2014. The draft should consider relevant input from scientists attending the 2014 bluefin data workshop. In particular, the draft should take into account the challenges associated with uncertain levels of funding each year when many research programs require sustained funding for several years in order to be effective. The SC agrees with previous SCRS recommendations to the Commission regarding the possibility of establishing a “scientific TAC” for bluefin tuna (SCRS 2012).

7. GBYP Data Access and Confidentiality

The SC discussed the need to make all of the data collected during ICCAT-contracted projects publicly available within a reasonable period after the completion of individual projects (allowing some time for quality assurance). It was noted that there are specific challenges associated with different types of data. For example, recovered electronic archival tags include a great deal of fine scale information that is not easily summarized or transmitted in a spreadsheet. The SC recommends the SCRS consider how best to make these data available (considering any relevant Commission rules for dissemination of confidential data).

8. Other matters

8.1 Issuance of calls for tenders

The call for Tenders should be published as soon as possible and prior to the availability of GBYP funds (but with the inclusion of a clause that indicates it is contingent on the availability of funds). The contracts should be signed soon after the funds are made available. Specifically, the SC recommends that the call for tenders related to the tagging projects and aerial surveys should be issued as soon as possible, but not later than the end of January, 2014.

8.2 Recommendations for use of remaining residual funds from Phase 4.

The SC recommended that full use be made of the residuals of funds still available for Phase 4 (approx. 114,000 euro). Approximately 50,000 – 60,000 euros will likely be spent on the contracts relating to the modeling coordinator and PIT tagging review. The SC recommended that any remaining funds be spent on a combination of archival and mini-PAT tags.

8.3 Improving Coordination of GBYP with other National Research Programs.

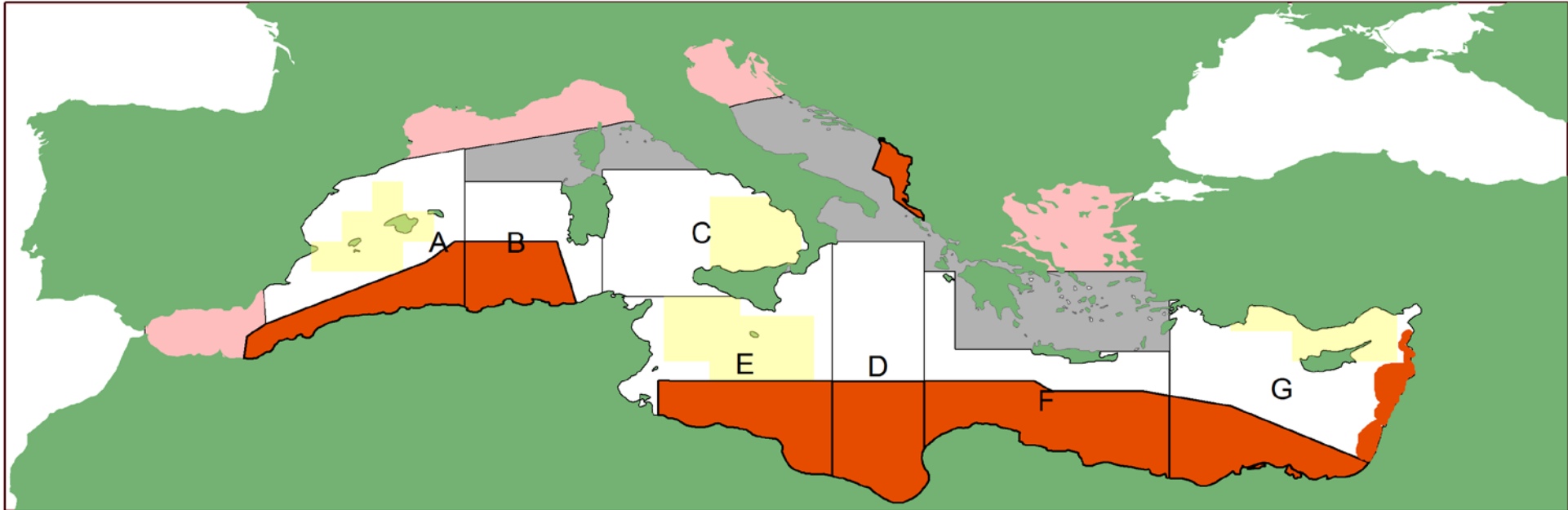
The SC recommended that coordination with other National Research Programs be improved; particularly with the national programs in place in the western Atlantic.

8.4 Proposed budget for phase 5.

The proposed budget is attached as Table 1.

Table 1. BUDGET AND ACTIONS FOR ICCAT-GBYP PHASE 5				
ACTIONS		ALLOCATION	Revised budget set by GBYP-SC	
Phase 4	Original		detail	total Phase 4
A	A	Coordination		377,000.00 €
A.1	A.1	Coordinator's and supporting staff's (P3) salary and benefits	280,000.00 €	
A.2	A.2	Travels and subsistence (including SC)	45,000.00 €	
A.3	A.3	Computer hardware and software	5,000.00 €	
A.4	A.4	Consumables and supplies	7,000.00 €	
A.5	A.5	Contracts for external Steering Committee members	30,000.00 €	
A.6	A.6	ICCAT Secretariat overhead	10,000.00 €	
B	B	Data mining, data retrieval and data elaboration (external contracts)		52,000.00 €
B.1	B.1	Data mining and data retrieval exercise:		
	B.1a	Ottoman archives	- €	
	B.1b	Recent (2000-2011) data recovery	- €	
		general data recovery	- €	
	B.1c	Historical data gaps including environment	- €	
	B.1d	model with thermocline data	- €	
	B.1e	SST data 2012-2014	- €	
B.2	B.2	Data analyses activities:	- €	
	B.2a	Data standardisation and basic analyses	32,000.00 €	
	B.2b	VMS Data Analysis	- €	
	B.2c	Market data analyses	20,000.00 €	
	B.2d	General analyses of aerial survey data	- €	
C	C	Aerial surveys (note 1)		570,000.00 €
C.1	C.1	Aerial survey Design revision & data analyses	15,000.00 €	
C.2	C.2	Workshop and training	15,000.00 €	
C.3	C.3	Aerial survey activity	510,000.00 €	
C.4	C.4	Calibration	30,000.00 €	
D	D	Tagging		1,206,000.00 €
D.1	D.1	Conventional tagging in the Bay of Biscay and Strait of Gibraltar and meeting	500,000.00 €	
D.2		Tagging trials with purse-seiners and tuna traps	510,000.00 €	
D.3	D.2	Electronic tags	100,000.00 €	
	D.3	Conventional tags and applicators	20,000.00 €	
D.4	D.4	Tag rewards	16,000.00 €	
		Tag liaison recovery	50,000.00 €	
D.5	D.5	Communication (broadcast and print media)	10,000.00 €	
E	E	Biological Work (external contracts)		310,000.00 €
E.1	E.1	Biological and genetic sampling & analyses;	285,000.00 €	
		Ageing calibration	15,000.00 €	
	E.2	Sampling operational meeting	- €	
E.2	E.3	Larval workshop	10,000.00 €	
	E.3	other costs	- €	
F	F	Modelling		135,000.00 €
	F.1a	Technical meetings on modelling	25,000.00 €	
	F.1b	GBYP methods meeting	- €	
	F.2	Risk analysis (external contract)+travels	- €	
	F.3	Historical data analysis (external contract)	- €	
	F.4	Coordinator "Operating Models"	40,000.00 €	
	F.5	Alternative management advice frameworks	- €	
F.1	F.6	Managements procedures (ext.contract)	- €	
F.2	F.7	External expert assistance for initial models development	70,000.00 €	
	F.8	Performing simulation trials (external contracts)	- €	
		Total revised reduced minimum budget		2,650,000.00 €

Figure 1 – Hypothesis for areas to be aerial surveyed in Phase 5. Light yellow areas (“internal”) are the areas where bft spawning usually occurs and that were surveyed in 2010, 2011 and 2013, slightly enlarged taking into account the sightings in 2013. White areas (“external”) are those areas where bft spawning might potentially occur in some years. Rose areas are those where bft spawning was never reported, while dark rose areas are those where bft spawning is unlikely to occur. Red areas are those where flights are interdict for various reasons or where flight permits for surveys are very difficult to obtain under a short notice. The survey might be expanded to some North African areas, depending on their accessibility.



GBYP 2014 Aerial Survey Areas

- Internal Areas = 279.368'28 sq. Km
- Survey Areas (A-G) = 866.235'57 sq. Km
- Restricted Airspace = 607.892'40 sq. Km
- No Spawning Areas

Restricted Airspace by FIR:

- Algeria (areas A and B): 134.703'67 sq. Km
- Libya (areas D, E part of F): 285.462'16 sq. Km
- Egypt (areas G and part of F): 187.726'57 sq. Km

ICCAT-GBYP STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING – 01/2013
MADRID 28-29 September 2013
DRAFT AGENDA

- A) Appointment of Chairman and Rapporteur
- B) Meeting Arrangements and Documents
- C) Review of Action Items from Previous Meetings
- D) Budget Situation
 - a. Unspent and Uncommitted Funds for Phase IV
 - b. Total Budget Scenario to Adopt for Making Phase V Recommendations
- E) Mid-Term Review
 - a. Implications for Planning Phase V and remainder of Phase IV
 - b. Longer Term Implications
- F) Aerial Survey
 - a. Key results and Any Major implementation issues
 - b. Aerial Survey Activity For Phase V
- G) Biological Sampling
 - a. Issues and Resolution to completing the tender arrangements for Phase IV
 - b. Implications of late contract for Phase IV work and how to mitigate
 - c. Activities for Phase V
 - d. Improving Contracting Arrangements
- H) Conventional Tag
 - a. Key results and Any Major implementation issues from Releases in Phase IV
 - b. Tag Recovery and Promotion Activities in Phase IV
 - c. Tag Release Activities for Phase V
 - d. Tag Recovery, Promotion and Reporting Rate Estimation Activities For Phase V
- I) Modelling
 - a. Activities Conducted in Phase IV
 - b. Additional Activities in the Remainder of Phase IV
 - c. Activities for Phase V
- J) Analysis of Japanese Market Data
 - a. Terms of Reference
 - b. Implementing the Work
- K) Improving SC Communication and Functioning
- L) Planning for GBYP II
- M) Policy on Conflict of Interest
- N) GBYP Data Access and Confidentiality
- O) Other Matters
- P) Adoption of the Report

Appendix 2

Outstanding Actions and Recommendations from Previous ICCAT-GBYP SC Meetings
Prepared by GBYP Coordination and Dr. T. Polacheck

Ref	Activity	Action/Recommendations	Who	Date	Status/notes/action
SC-2/12	Gen	Long term plan for extension of GBYP	SC/Coor	9/2012	To be discussed
SC-2/12	Gen	Strategy for multi-year funding	SC/Coor	9/2012	No progress
SC-2/12	DM?	Develop. Standards for Videoing Transfer to towing cages	Contract	19/4/12	No offers – some individual CP doing work
SC-7/11	TAG	contract (Call for Tenders) for a short time contract for analyzing the PIT tagging issue and create a report for the SCRS;			No progress to be discussed
SC-9/12	Coor	Explore the possibility of making the administrative procedure requested by the current EC Grant simpler	Coor		Meeting planned in 2012 cancelled, no action in 2013
SC-12/12	DM	Final report on Ottoman Archives, expected in January 2013	Ali Fuat	01/2013	Completed
SC-12/12	DM	Contract for Data recovery from Ottoman Archives	Coor		Cancelled based on meeting with Ali Fuat
SC-12/12	DM	Meeting in Istanbul to clarify information & develop a future plan	Coor	04/2013	Completed
SC-12/12	BIOL	Find solution to the transfer of biological samples collected in Libya to the Consortium	Coor	Spring-summer 2013	Completed
SC-12/12	TAG	Exploration of alternative approaches to tagging in the East Med	Coor	4/2013	Discussed but still unresolved
SC-12/12	MOD	Completion of Data Imputation Contract	Coor	01/2013	Accomplished
SC-12/12	MOD	Completion of ALK Contract	Coor	01/2013	Accomplished
SC-12/12	AS	Feasibility study for an extended work over the Med.	Coor	04/2013	Completed (done under Modelling budget)
SC-12/12	AS	Call for Tenders, awarding of contracts (7 areas covering the Med.), and negotiating permits	Coor	04-09/2013	Completed and final reports received
					Completed
SC-12/12	TAG	Juveniles and adults: Call for Tenders, awarding of contracts (5 objectives)	Coor	03-09/2013	Completed for objectives & one is still ongoing
SC-12/12	TAG	Tag recovery: arrangement for access to observers data for rates of recovery and reporting (catch data)	Coor		Rules prevent access – no progress
SC-12/12	TAG	Tag recovery: briefing with observers about tag recovery	Coor		Done with ROP-BFT but not with others
SC-12/12	TAG	Tag recovery: debriefing with observers about tag recovery	Coor	07/2013	Informal with a subset of ROP observers (to be discussed)
SC-12/12	TAG	Reconduct individuals who had been sent promotional material	Coor	ongoing	Quite limited
SC-12/12	TAG	Promotion of tag recovery using recreational and small-scale fishery broadcast and print media	Coor	ongoing	Quite limited and not very receptive
SC-12/12	TAG	Promotion of tag recovery in local media	Coor	ongoing	No progress (only in Italy)
SC-12/12	TAG	Improve coordination with other institutions on tag recovery data	Coor	ongoing	Some effort undertaken, but still problems

SC-12/12	TAG	Purchase and deployment of electronic tags in Phase 4	Coor	03-09/2013	All completed, except for ongoing Strait of Gibraltar
SC-12/12	DM	Contract for the Analysis of Market data	Coor	02/2013	Not completed , still to be discussed
SC-12/12	DM	Analysis of VMS data	CPC scientists	ongoing	
SC-12/12	DM	Analysis of data from farms for size composition in total catch	Secretariat		Completed
SC-12/12	BIOL	Determine whether ROP and national observers could collect biological samples as routine activities	Coor		OK for ROPs (but they need inputs from the contractors). Difficult to arrange for national observers
SC-12/12	BIOL	Ensure that samples for genetics are collected and archived whenever hard parts are collected as part of the ongoing biological sampling programme	Coor		Built into the Contract but signing delayed
SC-12/12	BIOL	Call for Tenders, awarding of contract,	Coor		Call issued on 06/03/13; contact signing delayed; to be discussed at the SC meeting
SC-12/12	BIOL	Provision of the complete set of age-at-length data one month prior to the SCRS biological data meeting	Contractor		Provided at the meeting
SC-12/12	BIOL	Written report with the preliminary results of genetic stock structure analysis be presented to GBYP modelling meeting	Contractor		Provided
SC-12/12	MOD	Completion of detail draft multi-year proposal for the modelling work	Secretariat		In progress – draft expected for SC meeting
SC-12/12	MOD	Formation of a group to develop an operating model for BFT and produce a written design to be presented at the 3-day modelling in May 2013	Secretariat		To be discussed & clarified during the SC meeting
SC-12/12	MOD	Call for tenders and awarding of contracts for management procedures and external expert assistance with OM development	Coor		To be discussed at SC meeting
SC-12/12	COOR	Development a draft of ToRs for Mid-Term GBYP Review	Dr. Polachek		Completed 01/2013
SC-12/12	COOR	Call for tenders and awarding of contracts for mid-term GBYP review	Coor		Completed
SC-12/12	COOR	Completion of ToRs for recommended GBYP activities ASAP (even before funds have been received)	Coor		See Annex 2 of GBYP Activity Report (none released before funds secured)
SC-12/12	COOR	Establishment of MoU with Italian fishing industry for their offer of 40-hour flight	Coor		Completed & implemented/ also for 5 days PS
SC-12/12	COOR	Early holding of a 3-day Phase-V SC planning meetings (preferably prior to SCRS)	Coor		Accomplished, but only 2 days scheduled

LIST OF DOCUMENTS
Working Papers for the GBYP Steering Committee Meeting
28-29 September 2013

SC-1/2013/WP/00: Draft Agenda

SC-1/2013/WP/01: Outstanding Actions and Recommendations from Previous ICCAT-GBYP SC Meetings, by ICCAT-GBYP Coordination & T. Polacheck

SC-1/2013/WP/02: Budget Tables (ongoing **Phase 4 & Phase 5**)

SC-1/2013/WP/03: ICCAT - GBYP Report of Activities – 2013 (last part of **Phase 3** and first part of **Phase 4**)

SC-1/2013/WP/04: Mid-Term Review of the ICCAT Atlantic-Wide Research Programme on bluefin tuna (ICCAT/GBYP **Phase 4** - 2013); by Alain Fonteneau, Ziro Suzuki and Andrew I. L. Payne; September 15, 2013; 1-22 (Document)

SC-1/2013/WP/05: Background documents concerning the Japanese Auction/Market Data

SC-1/2013/WP/06: Summary table of Biological & Genetic Sampling and Analyses – **Phase 3**

SC-1/2013/WP/07: Data and Publication policy - <http://www.iccat.int/GBYP/en/PubRules.htm>

SC-1/2013/WP/08: Some thoughts on improving Steering Committee Communication and Functioning, by T. Polacheck

SC-1/2013/WP/09: ICCAT-GBYP Modelling Programme - “Description of Work”; L. Kell

SC-1/2013/WP/10: Additional tables related to Conventional tagging

SC-1/2013/WP/11: Proposals received by ICCAT-GBYP for the Data Recovery Plan [for SC to decide whether to recommend pursuing]

Background Documents for the GBYP Steering Committee Meeting – 28-29 September 2013

General:

SC-1/2013/GEN/01: Report of ICCAT-GBYP Steering Committee; Sète (France), December 2012

SC-1/2013/GEN/02: Report of the 2013 Bluefin tuna Meeting on Biological Parameters Review; Tenerife (Spain), May 2013

Coordination:

SC-1/2013/COOR/01: ICCAT Atlantic-wide research programme for bluefin tuna (GBYP) activity Report for 2013 (**extension of Phase 3** and **first part of Phase 4**), ICCAT Secretariat, Di Natale, A., Idrissi, M., Justel Rubio, A.; SCRS/2013/144

Biological & Genetic Sampling and Analyses:

SC-1/2013/BIOGEN/01: Short-Term Contract for the Biological and Genetic Sampling and Analyses (ICCAT-GBYP 01/2012 B) within the GBYP (**Phase 3**), by the Consortium coordinated by AZTI; Final version of September 13, 2013: 1-100 (Document) + 1-16 (Annexes)

SC-1/2013/BIOGEN/02: Eastern bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*, l.) reproduction and reproductive areas and season, by Piccinetti, C., Di Natale, A., Arena, P.; SCRS/2012/149

SC-1/2013/BIOGEN/03: ICCAT-GBYP Activities for improving knowledge on bluefin tuna biological and behavioral aspects (ICCAT-GBYP **Phases 1 - 3**), ICCAT Secretariat, Di Natale, A., Idrissi, M., Justel Rubio, A.; SCRS/2013/074

Tagging:

SC-1/2013/TAG/01: Revised final report on the activities of the ICCAT/GBYP – **Phase 3** Tagging Program (2012); Final version of March 12, 2013, by Goñi, N. et al (Consortium); 1-35 (Document + Annexes)

SC-1/2013/TAG/02: ICCAT-GBYP Tag recovery activities -Up to September 2013, ICCAT Secretariat, Di Natale, A., Idrissi, M., Justel Rubio, A; SCRS/2013/177

SC-1/2013/TAG/03: Tagging programme 2013 Atlantic-Wide Research Programme on bluefin tuna (ICCAT/GBYP – **Phase 4**) -**TASK E**: Conventional tagging of adult bluefin tunas in traps in the Mediterranean Sea, Sardinian waters; Draft final report, by Consortium coordinated by Com.Bio.Ma (Italy) ; July 19, 2013; 1-38 (Document)

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SC-1/2013/TAG/06: Tagging Programme 2013 (ICCAT-GBYP 01/2013 – **OBJECTIVE C**) - Atlantic-Wide Research Programme on bluefin tuna (GBYP – **PHASE 4**) – Deliverable # 2 (Update of the short report), by KALI TUNA d.o.o. (Croatia); September 25, 2013; 1-10 (Document)

SC-1/2013/TAG/07: Report on the activities led between June 20th and September 18th 2013 in the framework of the ICCAT/GBYP **Phase 4** Tagging Program – **OBJECTIVE A**; by Consortium coordinated by AZTI (Spain) ; September 21, 2013 ; 1-32 (Document + Annexes). 1-8 (Document)

Aerial Surveys

SC-1/2013/AS/01: ATLANTIC-WIDE RESEARCH PROGRAMME ON BLUEFIN TUNA (ICCAT-GBYP – PHASE 4 - 2013) - ELABORATION OF 2013 DATA FROM THE AERIAL SURVEY ON SPAWNING AGGREGATIONS - DATA RECOVERY PLAN; Final Report; by Ana Cañadas & José Antonio Vázquez; 13 September 2013; 1-33 (Document, including Tables & Figures)

SC-1/2013/AS/02: Aerial Surveys in Sub-Area A; by Grup Air Med (Spain)

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SC-1/2013/AS/06: Aerial Surveys Design, by ALNILAM Ana Cañadas and José Antonio Vázquez; April 2013; 1-21 (Document, including Tables & Figures)

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SC-1/2013/AS/08: ICCAT-GBYP AERIAL SURVEY: JUVENILES VERSUS SPAWNERS. A SWOT ANALYSIS OF BOTH PERSPECTIVES); Di Natale, A., Idrissi, M.; SCRS/2012/140

Data Recovery Plan

SC-1/2013/DRP/01: Tentative GBYP bluefin tuna data recovery from the Ottoman archives, the maritime Museum archives and the archives of the Istanbul Municipality, by Örenc, A.F., Ünver, M., Düzcü, L., Di Natale, A.; SCRS/2013/143

SC-1/2013/DRP/02: Preliminary evaluation of the total catch removals of Eastern bluefin tuna: a comparison of the GBYP and ICCAT Task I Databases, by Justel-Rubio, A., Ortiz, M., Palma, C., Idrissi, M., Di Natale, A.; SCRS/2013/169

Modeling

SC-1/2013/MOD/01: REPORT OF THE 2013 MEETING ON BLUEFIN STOCK ASSESSMENT METHODS; (Gloucester, Massachusetts, United States – July 20 to 22, 2013)

**MID-TERM REVIEW: Their Specific Recommendations
and Comments relevant to current GBYP Program and Activities**

- 1. DATA RECOVERY: an analysis is needed of the value of the new GBYP-derived data in terms of supporting BFT stock assessments and especially inputs to management now and in future.**

The SC agrees in general with this and notes that Task II data collected by GBYP have been already analysed and now they will be uploaded to ICCAT BFT Task II data base; the same applies to GBYP Task I data having no conflicts or overlapping with previously reported data. All other data collected by GBYP are already in an ICCAT format and they are available to be used by SCRS as soon as the BFT Species Group decides how to use them.

- 2. The GBYP needs access to the observer data from farms (from all sources) and it needs to ensure that a true purse-seine catch at size matrix is developed by either the ICCAT secretariat or externally**

The SC agrees that access to the observer data from farms for scientific use is critical. In this regard, it has recommended that access be provided to assist with analyses of tag recovery and reporting rates. It also recognizes that the development of an improved estimate developing an improved and more realistic estimate of the purse-seine catch at size matrix is critical for improving the stock assessment and access to observer is essential for this. However, it is not clear that this task falls within the current GBYP remit. Thus, if this task is to be undertaken by the secretariat or an externally, then it is the Secretariat or the external persons performing this task that need access to the data.

- 3. Catches of BFT in the southern hemisphere: ICCAT and the GBYP needs to find a means of confirming or denying these rumours of cryptic catches, quantifying them as a time-series and, if they exist and are still being made, obtaining biological samples**

The SC agrees that this is an important need. However, it is not clear to the SC who and is best able to do this and to what extent it falls within the current remit of the GBYP. The current ICCAT- BFT regulation make obtaining data even from incidental catches extremely difficult to have. It does notes that the analyses of the market statistics may provide some insight into this difficult question.

- 4. Biological Sampling: The goal of this suggested methodology and analyses of the output by the GBYP would be to select an efficient sampling method (broadly accepted as accurate and replicable, but at modest cost) that would allow the geographic origin of BFT catches in different areas to be determined reasonably fast**

The SC has always considers that this is one of the goals of the genetic and micro-chemistry work of the biological sampling program. Many samples were collected so far. However, it also considers that a key component and high priority of the work is to provide information on stock and sub-stock structure and mixing for development of plausible hypotheses for specification of an operating model and for conditioning the operating model for use in MSE analyses.

- 5. A comprehensive synthesis of all information on BFT movements/migrations in the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, using all data available, would, in the opinion of the review team, be highly useful in terms of GBYP communications on the topic and help to stimulate the further development of this or the establishment of other mixing models.**

The SC agrees that this is one of the underlying reasons for the GBYP genetic and micro-chemistry components of the Biological Sampling Program combined with the electronic and conventional tagging work. However, it considers that it is premature to undertake such a comprehensive study until more complete results are available from the current genetic, micro-chemistry, and tagging work. The SC notes that there are extensive relevant data that have been collected outside of the GBYP. For any synthesis to be comprehensive it would need access to these data and a collaborative framework involving the relevant researchers needs to be established to ensure that the synthesis was truly comprehensive.

- 6. Heterogeneity of Mediterranean BFT subpopulations and of their migratory behaviour: More investigation now is clearly needed, for instance with genetic and microconstituent analysis of**

BFT born in the Mediterranean and subsequently caught in both the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, in an attempt to identify with some degree of certainty their subpopulations of origin. The review team believes that the GBYP should support this task as an important means of improving overall assessment and management of BFT and also in terms of conserving genetic diversity.

The GBYP since its inception has been and continues to support this task. Genetic and microconstituent analyses (including the collection of samples over the entire BFT geographic range) has been among the high priority items in the work program in each of the Phase I – IV program and extensive new information has already been generated by the GBYP Biological Sampling Program and is being utilized in the development of improved assessment models.

- 7. The GBYP needs to assign priority to studying the BFT caught off Atlantic Morocco (deploying more tags, and using genetic and microconstituent analysis) to remove any doubt about the origin and migration patterns of those fish**

The SC has consistently recognized that this is an important task and has recommended funding and continuation of the work. For Phase V, it has continued to recommend funding for this work. However, it is difficult to put an absolute priority on this work relative to other high priority components of the GBYP. In formulating, its recommendation on the funding and work to be carried out in each phase, it has sought to find a balance among the competing priorities based on the availability of funds, the potential value of the results and the feasibility/likelihood of obtaining results.

- 8. The GBYP support the holding of a workshop on tagging and tag results at the same time as one developing a manual and photographic guide to BFT age determination, inviting ICCAT as well respected external scientists to contribute.**

It was not clear whether the WS on tagging in this part of the Mid-Term reviews refers to tagging results of estimation of growth or a comprehensive review of the tagging results not only in terms of growth, but also fishing mortality rates, natural mortality rates, movements and stock structure. The SC considers comprehensive and thorough analyses of the tagging data as a critical task to be undertaken after there are sufficient data to make this a meaningful exercise and that a workshop to review the results of such analyses as valuable. However, it considers that it is pre-mature to do this at this time as sufficient time has not elapsed since the tags have been released given the current selectivity of the fishery and the sizes of released fish. The number of recovered tags from GBYP conventional tagging on 50 fish tagged (i.e.~ total of 74 tags = 43 Spaghetti, 24 bill fish and 7 miniPATs) is too small to provide reasonable statistical power for comprehensive quantitative analyses.

The SC supports of developing a manual and photographic guide to BFT age determination and a workshop as a way to achieve this. However, it considers that before developing such a manual, it is essential to first create a test set of otoliths and spines and have these circulated and read independently by different labs as a basis for determining the most appropriate protocols for age reading. The SC notes that this has already been initiated and the SC at its current meeting recommended (including funding) that this be done as part of the GBYP – Phase V activities.

- 9. Natural mortality at age (M_i) is one of the most important parameters in stock assessment models, but as a biological parameter it has not been investigated by the GBYP.**

The SC fully agrees that natural mortality rates at age are critical parameters in stock assessment models. However, there are few methods that actually allow these to be directly estimated and these remain a large uncertainty for almost all, if not all, fish stocks. The SC would be receptive to proposals that would be able to reliably produce such estimates within the constraints of current funding.

The SC notes that one of the few approaches that allows for a direct estimate of natural mortality at age is Brownie-type tagging experiments. The application of this method was an initial objective of the juvenile tagging program. However, because of changes in the BFT fishery compounded by lack of operational methods to tag large number of juveniles across the necessary age/size ranges for application of this method, the SC considers that the application of this method to BFT at this time is not feasible.

- 10. the review team strongly recommends that the GBYP find ways to have work funded on juvenile and adult BFT natural mortality, including any possible subsequent increase in natural mortality for older BFT**

From the SC perspective, before seeking funds, it is necessary to have a well defined and feasible method and proposal for doing this (see response above).

11. AERIAL SURVEY: there may be justification in surveying the adult component less frequently, perhaps every two years.

The SC agrees that it is important to develop a long term approach for the most cost effective way to produce a useful long-term index from aerial surveys. It notes that given a fixed amount of resources for such a survey that it is often better in terms of statistical power and implementation (e.g. ensuring consistency across surveys and in funding) to conduct two surveys with half the effort in each year than one survey with twice the effort every two years, particularly if there is substantial process error (e.g. such as variability in surfacing behaviour, changes in spatial distribution).

12. The GBYP does need to find a way to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of these aerial surveys and whether and how soon the output results might feed with some value into the stock assessment process

The SC agrees that it is important to consider the cost-effectiveness of any research or monitoring program but also recognizes that formal estimation of cost-benefits can often be mis-leading as the information required to conduct them does not exist. The SC notes that as part of the recommended analyses that have been carried out on the aerial survey, estimates of the likely timeframe required for a survey with a realized CV to be able to detect a trend in spawning stock biomass have been obtained and also some estimates of the CV that might be achieved with different levels of effort and associated costs. These later estimates require additional data and a longer time series of surveys in order to have reasonable precision. A preliminary costs/benefits analysis has been carried out in Phase 3. The SC has used the results of these analyses to guide its recommendation on the aerial survey. The SC further notes that in terms of quantitative evaluation of the value for stock assessment that this is best evaluated within the context of an operating model and MSE structure.

13. The traditional problem of very low reporting rates of tagged tunas in the East Atlantic and the Mediterranean (and by many longliners working the open sea) has seemingly undermined previous BFT tagging programmes in the area, although the fundamental problem is seldom discussed within the GBYP.

The SC has recognized the critical importance of improving reporting rates and their estimation since the beginning of the GBYP. It has had extensive discussion on these two issues at every GBYP SC meeting (e.g. “As discussed extensively by the SC, it is essential for the success of conventional tagging experiments to obtain high reporting rates for recapture fish and ensure that reporting rates are estimable for the major fisheries recapturing tagged fish” Feb. 2013 SC Report).

14. The review team urges the GBYP to commission an immediate quantitative analysis of current recovery rates of dart tags (by gear and area): such an analysis should allow the overall tagging programme to be improved, based on recoveries by gear, by fishery, by fish size and by geographic area.

The SC notes that it has examined returns by area and gear for recovery rates to date. However, it notes that only 50 tags have been recovered to date from GBYP tagging activities. As such, samples sizes are too small to allow for any meaningful in-depth quantitative analyses of current recovery rates. The age/size distribution of the fish tagged combined with current selectivity patterns for large fish in the BFT fisheries means that substantial number of recovery could not be expected least for several years after tagging. The SC further notes that recovery rates reflect the multiplicative product of recapture and reporting rates. As such, analyses of recovery rates, in themselves, are problematical to interpret, although if there is extensive overlap in area, time and size of fish, comparison of recovery rates among gear types may provide indication of reporting rate problems.

15. Further, the team recommends strongly that the recovery of tags from farms be assigned explicitly to the formally contracted observers as one of their basic responsibilities.

The GBYP has already worked with ROP contractor and the actual observers to ensure that recovery of tags recognized as a high priority task for them. Good cooperation has been obtained with this task. The SC agrees that having this explicitly specified among their contracted duties would be worthwhile and this has been already been achieved.

16. Better knowledge of reporting rates by gear (and of the uncertainties) is essential in supporting all quantitative analysis of recoveries: for determining migration rates, natural mortality, exploitation rate and ultimately stock size.

The SC fully concurs with this statement and has always considered that the estimation of reporting rates is a critical and essential part of any large scale tagging program. The difficult question is how to achieve this. The SC has and continues to recommend the implementation of various approaches for achieving this (e.g. tag seeding, use of observers) and notes that data collected this year has provided an initial estimate of reporting rate for the Bay of Biscay baitboat fishery. The SC further notes that PIT tags potentially provide the most powerful approach for estimating reporting rates and ensuring high reporting rates are achieved. The SC did recommend that PIT tagging be conducted as part of the conventional tagging program and plans to do this were included in the first year of the tagging work (including purchasing of equipment for this purpose). However, the implementation was prevented by the objection of one CPC. The SC re-iterates its recommendation for implement PIT tagging as part of the conventional tagging program.

17. The review team strongly recommends that the SCRS and the GBYP construct a common file and database with all these archival tag results included by working with the current owners of the data.

The SC supports this recommendation and recommends that all GBYP archival tag results be made available for such a database. It notes that the content and scope of the ICCAT database is outside of its mandate and responsibility and no legal mandatory provisions exist so far.

18. Environmental parameters and their potential effects on the BFT population are noticeably absent from current GBYP studies, and this absence may hamper the formal understanding of stock status and the ability to predict future trends.

Two preliminary analyses have been conducted in Phase I and Phase 2, in relation to aerial survey on spawners and a first prediction model was developed. The SC considers that an increased data are collected from the aerial survey further developments of this type of analysis maybe appropriate, including the data from electronic tags.

19. There is potential value in attempting to develop a full-scale SEAPODYM model for Atlantic BFT under the GBYP

The SC agrees that there may be potentially valuable in attempting to develop a full-scale SEAPODYM model for Atlantic BFT and also agrees that it is best considered a low priority. As such, given the limited funds available for GBYP activities, the SC does not recommend funding such work at this point,

20. The review team considers the CLOSE KIN method deserving of evaluation and study by ICCAT BFT scientists and by the GBYP, for example by obtaining an analysis and advice on the methodology from a neutral expert in genetics who has some knowledge of Atlantic BFT

As reported in the SC Report of Dec. 2012, the SC has considered the potential of the close kin methodology:

“The SC noted that close kin genetic tagging approach had been recently been developed and applied for estimating the spawning stock for SBT. This approach estimates the size of the spawning stock from the number of off-springs from sample of the adult stock that can be identified in a sample of juveniles. The approach uses genetic techniques to determine parent/off-spring pairs. One main advantage of this approach is that marking and recaptures can be obtained directly from the catch and does not require at sea tagging as long as a sufficient number of animals from both the adult and juvenile components of the stock is available for genetic sampling. For BFT, the current structure of the fishery would make this problematical for the juvenile component of the stock. In addition, there are complications in applying this approach when there are stock and sub-stock issues and when substantial portions of the spawning stock do not spawn every year. While this approach is interesting and potentially promising, it would be a major new undertaking. The SC concluded that the GBYP was not in a position to consider initiating such an undertaking at this time.”

The SC continues to consider the approach interesting and potentially promising for BFT. However, given that the current GBYP has only 2 more years and the current funding levels, it continues to consider that it is not in a position to initiate such a program at this time. However, it does consider that it warrants be evaluated for potential inclusion if the GBYP is extended past its current six year time horizon.

21. The ICCAT website contains many of those documents, but there is no overview or updated basic ICCAT text available on the GBYP.

The ICCAT-GBYP pages contain all public domain scientific documents produced by GBYP, including all final approved reports made by all contractors. Two overview documents on the work of GBYP have been produced annually (one for SCRS and the other for the Commission) and have been placed on the WEB. The SC notes that the front page only contains a general description of the programme based on ICCAT preferred style for its WEB site.

22. The review team strongly recommends that the final two years of the current project include a deliberate effort to capture all relevant BFT data (especially including GBYP data) in well-designed and visible format on the ICCAT database, for use by BFT WGs and scientists

The SC supports this recommendation but notes the content and scope of the ICCAT database is outside of its mandate and responsibility.

23. The review team considers that all the ICCAT BFT data (including those derived from the GBYP) that are of scientific interest need to be available for appropriate scientific analysis now and in future, their confidentiality being managed by the ICCAT secretariat

The SC is agrees with and fully supports this recommendation. Its implementation is beyond the responsibility of GBYP.

24. Some of the potential weaknesses in the GBYP programme identified above may of course be due in part to deficiencies in the functioning of the GBYP's Steering Committee, perhaps attributable to the close relationship all members of the SC have with ICCAT and indeed BFT processes, but there may be other reasons too, so it would be inappropriate for the review team to criticize the SC directly. However, having a scientific member of the SC that is truly external to current ICCAT processes would likely enhance the credibility with which the SC and the GBYP is viewed from outside

The composition of the GBYP SC was endorsed by the Commission based on a recommendation from the SCRS when the program was establish and included one external scientist, Dr. Polacheck, who was contracted for this role. He had no previous relationship with ICCAT processes or BFT assessments/research except for presentations to a few ICCAT Symposiums/workshops. The SC has previously recommended that an additional external scientist would be a useful addition to the SC. However, this remains a decision for the Commission.

25. An external peer review of the GBYP's work and results needs to be carried out every two years

The SC agrees that external peer review of the GBYP is essential and should be undertaken on a regular basis. The SC notes that all of the main components of the GBYP work program require at least several years of dedicated effort before they could be expected to generate meaningful and useful results. Thus, in determining the frequency of such review, the timeframe for producing results needs to be considered and a two year review cycles may be too frequent.

26. There is also a clear lack of real communication/interaction between the GBYP and the SCRS

The SC notes that many scientific papers and reports have been provided annually to all relevant ICCAT-SCRS intersessional meetings, to the SCRS BFT Species Group meetings and to SCRS Plenary by GBYP, with complete information about all Phases of the programme. The following year GBYP activities and budget have been always discussed by the SCRS in Plenary

27. The review team recommends that the current experienced GBYP administrative staff corps be provided contractual certainty of their positions at least until the end of the current GBYP programme in 2015

The SC fully agrees with this recommendation if it is consistent with and can be accommodated within ICCAT's rules and administrative procedures,