

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

(ICCAT Secretariat)

FAO Common Oceans/ABNJ Tuna Project

At the 2017 ICCAT Commission meeting, it was decided to continue to cooperate with this programme provided that there are benefits to ICCAT. To this end, since the previous annual Commission meeting, the ICCAT Secretariat has participated in several FAO Common Oceans/ABNJ Tuna Project initiatives. These include participation in the following meetings that were funded or partially funded by the project:

1. 2nd Workshop of the Tuna Compliance Network, 15-18 February 2018, Honiara, Solomon Islands
2. FAO Coordinating Working Party on Fisheries Statistics (CWP) technical workshop on global harmonization of tuna fisheries statistics, that was held in Rome, 19-22 March 2018;
3. Joint tuna RFMO MSE Working Group meeting held at University of Washington in Seattle, 13-15 June 2018;
4. Fifth project Steering Committee (PSC) of the Common Oceans ABNJ tuna project held in Rome, 16-18 July 2018;
5. 2nd meeting of the ICCAT Expert Port Inspection Group for Capacity and Assistance, Madrid, 18-19 September 2018.

In addition, the ICCAT Executive Secretary and his Assistant informally met the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project coordinator at the margins during of the last COFI meeting held in Rome in June 2018.

ICCAT coordinated and concluded in late 2017, together with the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project, a *Feasibility study on the development of an Online Reporting System* (FORS). This includes both a feasibility study to determine the resources, costs, technologies required to implement an online reporting system, as well as the production of a demo online reporting tool. During 2018, various “outcomes” of the FORS study (technology, development model, concepts, recommendations, etc.) were used by the Secretariat aimed at improving the SCRS statistical online validation system. Furthermore, this prototype tool went into a testing phase during 2018. Following the objectives of the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna project, the FORS tool and study results are generic and can potentially be applied across multiple tuna RFMOs.

According to the project coordination team, the total amount spent with the abovementioned ICCAT activities in 2018 amounted to US\$47,913.01 (estimated cost based on a Euro/US dollar exchange rate of 0.858).

The Steering Committee of the FAO Common Oceans/ABNJ tuna Project met at the FAO headquarters in Rome in July 2018 and overviewed the activities carried out through the four components of the project, as well as of the other projects being carried out under the Common Oceans Programme. The draft work plan and budget for year six was reviewed, and some discussion was held on the future process for developing a project proposal for GEF 7. A 12 month no cost extension has been approved for the project in order to finish those activities which were still ongoing. Among the funding approved (estimated at a total of \$US164,000) are the financing for the:

- ICCAT Integrated On-line management System (IOMS, phase I) - total available amounts to \$US75,000;
- Port inspection capacity building: the cost of consultant(s) to assess the needs of Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria - total available amounts to \$US12,000;
- attendance of participants from developing countries to the following meetings if requested and held before 31 July 2019:
 - joint t-RFMOs Working Group on By-catch – total available amounts to \$US40,000 (not exclusively to ICCAT);
 - meeting of the ICCAT Standing Working Group on Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers – total available amounts to \$US12,000;
 - 2nd joint t-RFMOs Working Group on FADs – to be host by IATTC in May 2019 (tentatively 8-10 May) – total available amounts to \$US10,000;

- 3rd meeting of the joint t-RFMOs MSE Working Group, if requested, which can include funding for the establishment of a github – total available amounts to \$US15,000;
- restructuration of the tuna.org website as a whole, including MSE page + MSE github cost – to be developed by FAO in close cooperation with ICCAT and other t-RFMOs.

Further information regarding ICCATs involvement in the FAO Common Oceans/ABNJ Tuna Project are provided in **PLE_108/18**.

KOBE process

Mr. Stefaan Depypere (EU) 1st Vice-Chair of ICCAT is the Chair of the Kobe Steering Committee since early 2017. The Technical Working Group (TWG) on Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) has been lead since its establishment by ICCAT. While initially the TWG made most of its work virtually, it had its first official meeting in Madrid from 1-3 November 2016, whereas a second meeting was held in June 13-15 at the University of Washington in Seattle (USA) with experts from all t-RFMOs.

Within the Kobe process ICCAT Secretariat has also taken leadership of the Joint t-RFMO FAD Working Group, which held its 1st meeting in Madrid between 19 and 21 April 2017. In the meantime a Technical Working Group has been set, including expert from the t-RFMOs involved, and starting discussion on different aspects including: definitions, indicators, data collection, research, marking and tracking. In addition a second meeting of the Joint t-RFMO FAD Working Group that will be hosted by IATTC is tentatively scheduled for 8-10 May 2019.

CITES

In 2018 contacts have been established with CITES, following the recommendation made by the SCRS Sharks Working Group for the ICCAT Secretariat to make an official request to CITES to facilitate the sampling of CITES listed species for the purposes of scientific research conducted under the auspices of ICCAT research programmes. The Secretariat agreed that it would establish contact with the CITES Secretariat to seek a solution. The Secretariat has been informed that the issue is being taken up by the CITES Standing Committee, which has a Working Group dealing with the simplified procedure for permits and certificates. The Standing Committee met in Rosa Khutor, Sochi (Russian Federation), 1-5 October 2018, but no additional information has been received by the Secretariat on this issue.

ICES

Considering the fruitful experience ICCAT and ICES have had in recent years regarding scientific collaboration, in 2018 both organisations expressed their willingness to strengthen this cooperation and explore new initiatives and discussions which have commenced between the Secretariats. It has been agreed therefore that it is appropriate and desirable to improve collaboration between ICCAT SCRS-ICES, particularly in the areas of by-catch, sharks and stock assessment issues, through our Sub-committee on Ecosystems and By-catch, the Shark Species Group, as well as the WGSAM. Specifically, it would be convenient to encourage the participation of ICES scientific experts in ICCAT Shark Stock Assessments, and WGSAM meetings. At the same time ICCAT encourages SCRS Scientists to participate in the equivalent ICES working groups.

ACAP (The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels)

In 2016, ICCAT signed guidelines for cooperation with ACAP. This cooperation is a non-binding agreement that covers such issues as participation as observers in each other's meetings, as well as consultation, cooperation and collaboration on issues of common issue. In 2018 a scientist from ACAP attended the SCRS meeting of the Sub-committee on Ecosystems and informed on the latest advice from the ACAP for reducing the impact of pelagic longline fishing operations on seabirds.

ISSF

The International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) continues providing the Secretariat with detail catch (by vessel trip, species and commercial size category) for all purchases made ISSF-participating companies. These correspond to unloading of Atlantic catches from tropical tunas (bigeye, yellowfin, and skipjack) and albacore to canning plants around the world. This information has previously been used by the SCRS scientists to complement and improve the Ghanaian Task II statistics. It has been noted that the

submissions have been made in a diverse range of formats. As such, ISSF is looking to standardise the data submissions into the future. Furthermore, ISSF is working to provide to ICCAT, by 2019, all currently available data in such a format that would allow its use by the SCRS. As such, the data received to-date are still being stored by ICCAT, but have not been made available for use by the SCRS at this stage.

OSPAR

In early 2018 the OSPAR's Executive Secretary visited the Secretariat and informed that OSPAR has currently an ongoing initiative on a possible Marine Protected Area in the North-east Atlantic. Accordingly, due to possible implication to ICCAT, the Secretariat was invited to follow this process and throughout the year attend two OSPAR meetings (details available in document STF-201/18, Annex 1). During those meetings the Secretariat presented relevant available information on ICCAT fisheries in the area. Such information has also been circulated to the CPC's, together with the correspondence received from OSPAR, including that related to the draft OSPAR site nomination proforma and associated background information made available on-line at: <https://www.ospar.org/work-areas/bdc/marine-protected-areas/ospar-seeks-views-on-the-nomination-proforma-for-the-north-atlantic-current-and-evlanov-seamount-mpa>.

WECAFC

On the margins of the COFI 33 meeting held in Rome, 9-13 July 2018, the ICCAT Executive Secretary briefly met the new WECAFC Executive Secretary. The responsible for WECAFC promised to draft a proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding between the two Organizations, due to relevancy of some ICCAT fisheries for some of its members and to improve data reporting to ICCAT. However, for the time being no document or additional communication was received by the Secretariat in this regard. The Coordinator of the of the Caribbean Billfish Project (Roy Bealey) attended the SCRS Blue marlin stock assessment session held in Miami (US) 18-22 June 2018 and presented the most relevant projects results that can help enhancing reporting to ICCAT of fisheries statistics by WECAFC members, which are largely unreported to ICCAT. Some SCRS scientists have been also attending WECAFC/project meeting, and the SCRS recognizes the benefit of the effort that WECAFC is pursuing to develop software and monitoring structures through capacity building that could help Caribbean countries report ICCAT species fishery statistics to both the WECAFC and ICCAT databases. Therefore, the SCRS recommends the Secretariat and CPCs support this effort by collaborating with WECAFC.

GFCM

Informal contacts were established during the 2018 COFI33 meeting between the GFCM and ICCAT Executives Secretaries, aiming to further strengthen the cooperation between the two organizations. The possibility of developing a Memorandum of Understanding was suggested.

ATLAFCO

The Executive Secretary attended the 10th Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers on Fisheries Cooperation among the African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO) held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire (26-28 August) (details available in document STF-201/18, Annex 1). On the margins of the meeting, it was discussed the possibility for ATLAFCO and ICCAT to further strengthen the cooperation between the two organizations.