

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT
FIRST STEPS PROPOSED TO DEVELOP AN OVERARCHING
CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGY FOR ICCAT

(Document presented by STACFAD Chair)

1. Background Information

Report of the Independent Performance Review of ICCAT has recommended to the Commission to develop an overarching strategy for capacity building and assistance programs, which integrates the various existing capacity building initiatives, given the identified need for a coordinated strategy for capacity building and assistance programmes.

ICCAT has so far established a number of capacity building programs and funds aiming at improving the data collection, enhancing implementation capacity for MCS measures in place by taking into account the special needs of developing CPCs (e.g., Atlantic Wide Research Programme for Bluefin tuna, Atlantic Ocean Tuna Tagging Programme, Enhanced Program for Billfish Research, Small Tunas Year Program, Shark Research and Data Collection Programme, etc.).

With these programs, along with the overall objective of achieving a better compliance to ICCAT conservation and management measures (e.g., Port State Measures), are also intended to achieve a strengthened participation and involvement by Scientists and Managers from developing Contracting Parties into the works (e.g., Management Strategy Evaluation) of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

2. Capacity Building Assistance for Participation

As a matter of fact, the dedicated portion of the ICCAT website, namely “Special Funds for Participation in ICCAT Meetings and Capacity Building”, contains useful information in terms of citing the current strategy and processes adopted by ICCAT as to capacity building initiatives for strengthening participation of developing Contracting Parties to ICCAT meetings.

In the current situation, the major instrument in financing the participation of developing ICCAT Contracting Parties to the work of ICCAT is the Special Meeting Participation Fund (MPF) as to which the Commission has also adopted its rules of procedure for deadlines for submission of funding requests and the documentation required. MPF is mainly being sustained with voluntary contributions from limited number of CPCs. Allocation from regular budget to the MPF was substantiated as €72,000 for 2019. A substantial increment is now being proposed for the next biennium, 2010-2021, that is intended to partly accommodate the ongoing concerns towards the precarious situation of the MPF.

Depending on emerging circumstances and needs, modifications may be decided by ICCAT in the use of funds and allocation of resources to the existing capacity development funds such as the decision that was taken in 2017 with respect to utilization of Scientific Capacity Building Fund (SCBF). In its future deliberations, as an alternative option to alleviate the financial situation of the Fund, the Commission may consider to adopt a permanent model to include in the regular ICCAT budget a certain level of the required resources for capacity building assistance through the MPF. In this context, it is deemed necessary to take additional actions to ensure a more effective use of capacity development assistance funds in a way to have an extended number of developing Contracting Parties could benefit from its funding assistance.

3. Capacity Building Assistance for Improving Compliance to MCS Measures

The most up-to-date regulations on infrastructure development and capacity building programs for compliance with the ICCAT measures adopted for the Port States Measures (PSM) Agreement are being reflected in ICCAT Recommendations 14-08, 16-18 and 18-09, respectively.

The measures introduced in this context are mainly related to addressing issues with respect to the special requirements of developing ICCAT Contracting Parties and providing assistance to support and strengthen the implementation of effective port inspection systems by such ICCAT CPs through a special funding mechanism called Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance Fund (MCSF).

In addition to this, a "Port Inspection Expert Group for Capacity Building and Assistance" was established in 2017 to identify the port inspection capacity building, level and type of assistance needs of developing Contracting Parties. The Expert Group also advises the Commission on whether or not ICCAT funding would be required to facilitate the Commission's decisions with respect to allocation of resources into and expenditures from the MCS Fund.

Recommendation 109 of the second Performance Review of ICCAT with respect to participation and capacity building stipulates "development of an overarching strategy for capacity building and assistance programs, which integrates the various existing capacity building initiatives". Establishment of "Special Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance Fund (MCSF)" and "Port Inspection Expert Group for Capacity Building and Assistance" in the context of implementation of port State measures have been quite relevant and beneficial in addressing the core elements of the aforementioned recommendation of the Performance Review.

4. Steps Proposed to Develop an Overarching Strategy for Capacity Building & Assistance in ICCAT

Different administrative implementation capacities and fisheries characteristics of individual CPCs in the Convention area constitutes a key challenge that requires carrying out of regional analysis to identify the shortcomings and actual needs in terms of capacity building initiatives for an effective implementation of conservation and management measures.

To this end, a mechanism needs to be established to acquire up-to-date information on the real needs of developing CPCs by implementing one or more of the following methods:

Option 1:

- During the course of [2020], Chairman of ICCAT, assisted by the Executive Secretary, will organize a series of Regional Conferences / Workshops with a view to acquiring as much reflections as possible to make an evaluation as to whether or not ICCAT's current capacity building initiatives have been sufficient and beneficial to accommodate the needs of developing CPCs to effectively implement the conservation and management measures in place.
- As applicable, the Fund for the ICCAT Chairman's Regional Workshops (or ICCAT Chairman Fund) will be utilized to finance the missions.
- Answers of the developing CPCs from different regions to the following questions will be sought:

Questions for Assessment of Capacity Building & Assistance Needs of developing CPCs

- Have the current Capacity Building initiatives implemented by ICCAT so far been sufficient to fully accommodate the needs for a proper implementation of the relevant ICCAT conservation and management measures, i.e., data collection, reporting obligations, port state measures and other MCS measures.
- If not, what have been the key sources of challenges or failure for the current capacity building initiatives implemented?
- To ensure a more efficient and successful implementation of ICCAT capacity building initiatives, what kind of measures or new instruments could be introduced?

- As to the effects of similar capacity building assistances received from different donor mechanisms other than ICCAT funds (i.e., Part VII Assistance Fund, FAO Common Oceans ABN), other RFMOs, etc.) towards the same areas, have their impacts been qualified to improve the implementation capacity of the CPC when compared to those capacity building assistance provided by ICCAT?

Option 2:

- Considering the ongoing works in the context of the “Expert Group for Capacity Building and Assistance” and relying on the knowledge acquired by the Expert Group from the assessment processes of developing ICCAT Contracting Parties in respect of their analysed needs; outcomes of deliberations of the Port Inspection Expert Group (established in the context of Rec. 16-18) and works of other capacity building programs of ICCAT will be utilized by the Secretariat in drafting of a consolidated strategy document on the current capacity building and assistance programs under the guidance of STACFAD Chair.
- The strategy document will include potential scenarios on how to synchronise and overarch capacity building aspects of different programs that are being implemented by ICCAT and CPCs and this document will be reviewed by STACFAD in 2020.

Option 3:

- In the event that a specialized service or outsourcing is deemed necessary to carry out further works in identification of the required capacity building, level and type of the assistance needs of developing Contracting Parties, as well as in development of a blanket strategy; such activities may be financed either directly through the Working Capital Fund or Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance Fund (MCSF) depending on whichever would be more convenient in terms of their balances at that time.