

Original: English

**LETTER FROM STACFAD CHAIR
(ON WAY FORWARD ON ROUND 2 OF CORRESPONDANCE PERIOD)**

6 November 2020

SUBJECT: LETTER AND REVISED DRAFT PROPOSALS TO BE DISCUSSED VIA CORRESPONDENCE ON STACFAD – ROUND #2

Dear Colleagues,

As we embark on our second round of discussions through correspondence of the essential business of STACFAD, I would like to summarize below the outcomes of the first phase and further actions taken in view of the statements, comments or edits to the draft proposals by CPCs.

STACFAD related statements, comments or edits to the documents and draft proposals have been received from Algeria, Canada, European Union, Japan, Morocco, Norway and Senegal.

Norway and Japan have provided general comments in favor of adoption of the documents submitted. However, Japan has indicated that they would await further information on voluntary contributions to finance the proposed budget for 2021 SCRS requests before adoption of STF-209.

As regards to Appendix 2 to STF-205, Morocco and Senegal have requested to remove the maximum limitation of 4 delegates/scientists, as stipulated under point 4. a).

I would like to underline that the aim of the proposed measure is essentially to avoid any future precarious situations caused by limited resources that may restrict a wider participation by the developing States in particular those that are most in need. On the other hand, I recognize that the delegations at annual meetings of the Commission may need to be multidisciplinary and therefore larger so as to carry out the parallel and bilateral consultations of the different working groups and panels. By taking into consideration these aspects, so as to find a potential compromise on the proposal that could address the concerns expressed; it is proposed that this maximum limitation be maintained in the Recommendation, and that the exception of the annual Commission meeting be added, where the number of official delegates stated above will apply as six instead of four. A new version of the document (Doc. No. STF-205A_AP2 / 2020) can be found in the [2020 Commission Documents website](#).

As to Appendix 3 of STF-205, Algeria has requested a longer deadline to process the corresponding travel visas.

It is therefore proposed to change the deadline for applications to 75 days under point 2 and 60 days under point 4. A new version of the document (Doc. No. STF-205A_AP3 / 2020) can be found in the [2020 Commission Documents website](#).

Canada (see STF-211) has indicated that the implications of COVID have been reflected in the Commission's finances, but not in the 2021 budget; these implications would be maintained for travel at least in the first semester of 2021. It requests that underspending on these activities be reflected and discussed within STACFAD on the basis of the options and recommendations proposed by the Secretariat. In this line, Canada has highlighted that it had been agreed that the SCRS would not dedicate additional funds for the tropical tunas MSE and that the unused balance of the Strategic Research Programme in 2020 could be used for activities in 2021.

A new version of the budget STF-203A is proposed with amendment of the Commission expenses budget for 2021; transfer of a proportion of the travel chapters balances to chapters that are still pending regularization within the Commission budget (Chapter 3. Commission meetings and Chapter 11. Strategic Research Programme). This transfer will only be carried out for the 2021 budget, and in the following budgets these amounts will be maintained as they were initially distributed. The transfers proposed are as follows:

Chapter 11 – Strategic Research Programme. Increase of an additional €250,000.00 transferred from Chapter 13.b) – Special Meeting Participation Fund.

Chapter 3. Commission meetings. Increase of an additional €68,495.00 transferred from:

- €15,450.00 from Chapter 2 – Travel.
- €11,845.00 from Chapter 8.b) – Travel to improve statistics.
- €25,750.00 from Chapter 13. a) – Travel by ICCAT and SCRS Chairs.
- €15,450.00 from Chapter 13. c) – Travel by ICCAT officers (developing ICCAT Contracting Parties).

STF-203A also includes the change from the United Kingdom Overseas Territories to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, following its adherence to ICCAT on 21 October 2020, and the changes in membership of the different panels.

Please note that new version of the document (Doc. No. STF-203A / 2020) can be found in the [2020 Commission Documents website](#).

As to the use of the balance of the 2020 Strategic Research Programme for activities in 2021, it is informed that the contracts implemented in 2020 have been extended for 6 months to complete these activities, therefore, the activities presented for 2021 require new financing. As indicated in STF-209, the Secretariat is working closely with some CPCs that usually make voluntary contributions to ensure additional funds for the 2021 science budget.

As to the Statement by the European Union in relation to STACFAD (see STF-210), the following has been requested:

- STF-209. To increase the science budget allocation and prioritize SCRS activities before formulating requests for 2021.
- STF-206. It is highlighted that only a portion of the MPF balance will be used since there will not foreseeably be any meetings in the first semester of 2021.
- STF-205. The European Union supports the eligibility criteria for receiving financial assistance through the MPF. It will be necessary to meet the minimum criteria established for voluntary contributions from the EU to be made available.
- STF-204. The European Union encourages the VWG-SF to continue to reflect on potential additional actions that could be taken in light of the continuous increase in arrears and the repercussions on the budget and smooth functioning of the Commission.

In response to the European Union, it is proposed to extend for a further 4 years, the progressive regularization that has been carried out in the past 4 years of the activities that were being financed through the Working Capital Fund and that should be included in the Commission budget. The following activities that have yet to be regularized: financing of SCRS activities and the expenses of the Commission's annual meeting.

As to the Meeting Participation Fund, the new version of the budget STF-203A provides for transfer between the relevant chapters to this end.

Finally, Senegal (see STF-212) suggested to postpone for 2021 the discussions on the obligation to pay by cooperating members, as this would be an obstacle to adherence to ICCAT by other countries. In this respect, I would propose that the VWG-SF to continue addressing the pending issues related to observer fees and contributions from cooperating non-Members in its subsequent deliberations with a view to developing specific proposals for consideration by STACFAD in 2021.

The statements, comments or edits by CPCs as to each of the STACFAD related documents and draft proposals, as well as final edits and final proposals are also provided in the attached worksheets.

As per Circular 7324/2020, CPCs who may have comments can submit those as Statements to STACFAD, as the Commission Chair agreed to allow one statement per CPC and subsidiary body in each round of the correspondence period. These will be translated and posted on the [2020 Commission documents webpage](#). Comments other than in the form of statements may also be forwarded to me and the Secretariat, but these will not be translated to avoid delays on the decision-making process. There will be a two-week period for comments. The exact deadline will be specified by the Secretariat in the cover circular to this letter. Notwithstanding, I strongly suggest sooner reactions from CPCs to have enough time for the required preparations, consultations if needed, to be able finalize our work by the deadline.

Since we may have a rather short third round for discussing the pending items through correspondence, I intend to search for a consensus on the pending issues, to the extent possible, through bilateral consultations where needed. Accordingly, I would like to thank each of you in advance for your flexibility, understanding and cooperation in this process.

Best regards,



Hasan Alper Elekon
STACFAD Chair