

Original: English

## COOPERATION WITH FAO COMMON OCEANS/ABNJ TUNA PROJECT (PHASE II)

At the 2017 ICCAT Commission meeting, ICCAT re-confirmed its decision to continue to partner with this program provided that there continue to be benefits to ICCAT. To this end, in 2020, the ICCAT Secretariat participated in the FAO Common Oceans/ABNJ Tuna Project and ABNJ Projects Steering Committees, 27-30 January 2020, Rome, Italy, to review performance of the first phase of the project and to initiate planning for the second phase. ABNJ Tuna I supported ICCAT and the other tuna RFMOs (t-RFMOs) in several ways, mainly through technical support and trainings to:

- advance the adoption of harvest strategies and the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries management (EAFM);
- improve tools to fight Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing; and
- reduce negative impacts of tuna fishing on the environment.

Support was also provided to foster exchange and learning across tuna RFMOs through joint meetings e.g. on bycatch and FADs, management strategy evaluation, EAFM and the Tuna Compliance Network.

The terminal evaluation of ABNJ Tuna I (available [here](#)) was highly positive in its assessment of the project's many results, some of which were described as transformative. The evaluation considered the large number of project partners, with many different backgrounds, most of which with a vast pre-existing experience in the fisheries management sector one of the strengths of the project, significantly contributing to the delivery of project outputs and to co-financing. The results from ABNJ Tuna I have been significant, even though it is not possible to objectively assess how much of this progress can be attributed to the ABNJ Tuna I. However, through collaboration with partners, including ICCAT and other t-RFMOs, Industry, and NGOs, among other outcomes, the project contributed significantly to improvement of fisheries governance and management practices, had a catalytic effect helping to disseminate and to showcase the benefits of EMS+ERS and to boost MCS improvement efforts overall and had a strong demonstration effect of the significant results that can ensue from the use of good bycatch management practices.

Based upon this evaluation and on phase II [planning document](#) prepared by the FAO Project Development Team after consultations with the Secretariat and other partners, in June 2020, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council approved a second phase of the project (Tuna II) with a total GEF grant of 14.4 million USD. ABNJ Tuna II will be one of five projects funded under the GEF-7 Common Oceans Program and represents a continuation of the earlier project but designed to reflect a shifting baseline. Since then, consultation between the Secretariat and the FAO Project Development Team continued to refine the project proposed activities, which will be submitted to GEF by December 2021 for their final review and endorsement.

ABNJ Tuna II will build upon successes achieved in ABNJ Tuna I and continues to aim to further advance responsible, efficient and sustainable tuna production and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ in the face of a changing environment. ABNJ Tuna II focuses on the same components as ABNJ Tuna I, with intent to build upon phase 1 successes and fill gaps identified in Phase I:

1. Strengthened management of tuna fisheries
2. Strengthened MCS (Monitoring, Control and Surveillance measures) to improve fisheries data, compliance with CMMs (Conservation and Management Measures) and to tackle IUU fishing
3. Reduction of environmental impacts of tuna fisheries

During ABNJ Tuna II, ICCAT's Secretariat anticipates continuing as a founding member of the Project Steering Committee., thus providing guidance on project activities to assure they yield benefit to ICCAT. Further, upon endorsement of ABNJ Tuna II, the Secretariat will receive funding to support several activities the Secretariat proposed that have direct benefits to ICCAT and ICCAT's members, including: i) improving compliance with

ICCAT conservation and management measures; ii) enhancing the ICCAT Integrated Online Management System (IOMS); iii) testing ecosystem based indicators and management policies; and, iv) supporting harmonization of commonalities shared by t-RFMOs (e.g., observer or Electronic Monitoring Systems data, Harvest Strategies /Management Strategic Evaluation, FAD, bycatch, etc.). Further, activities will be undertaken to improve understanding and fishery management advice on potential climate change impacts on Atlantic tuna fisheries, and on further monitoring of marine megafauna bycatch in tuna fisheries, especially in the South Atlantic. Of more global interest, but also benefiting ICCAT include development and implementation of e-learning materials for use by a broad audience related to MSE and HS, continued support for the Tuna Compliance Network established under ABNJ Tuna I to develop recommendations and methodology for best practices for compliance assessments (International MCS Network), supporting formalizing standards and protocols for uptake of electronic monitoring) and electronic reporting for uptake by tuna-RFMOs and flag states, among others.

The Secretariat is committing a total of \$US 5,165,025 over a 5-year period for in-kind co-finance for ABNJ Tuna II, which is in line with the commitment made for ABNJ Tuna I. The total amount to be funded by GEF is of \$US 1,503,030. Additional information is provided in **Appendix 1** of this document.

**Activities proposed by ICCAT for the work plan and budget for  
TUNA II FAO Common Oceans/ABNJ Tuna Project**

**Capsule 1: Compliance-related capacity building**

*Objective:* To improve compliance with ICCAT conservation and management measures, in particular, but not limited to Port Inspection.

*Brief description of activities to be developed by ICCAT:* To organize a series of capacity building initiatives to improve compliance with ICCAT conservation and management measures, in particular, but not limited to Port Inspection, in particular for those CPCs that lack the means, either technical or financial, to implement some of the measures adopted by tuna RFMO.

*Proposed budget:* \$US 451,080 provided by GEF and \$US 1,207,720 as ICCAT Secretariat in-kind contribution.

*Duration:* 5 years

**Capsule 2: Enhancement of Online Reporting (OR) systems**

*Objective:* To enhance the ICCAT Integrated Online Management System (IOMS), currently under development, through the development of extensions for automatic data interoperability with various projects from FAO, t-RFMOs and their Member States, and other potential stakeholders.

*Brief description of activities to be developed by ICCAT:* Centralized online data management (reporting, validation, storage, availability, etc.) systems, are fundamental to the successful implementation of modern-day conservation and management measures, which requires the handling of large volumes of heterogeneous information. By adopting an open-source model in the development of the ICCAT IOMS, many of their elements (database models, architectures, code, coding practices, web-app modules, etc.) can be shared, adapted, and used by all t-RFMOs. The joint t-RFMO website (<http://www.tuna-org.org>) has the potential to become a centralised hub of shared information produced by all t-RFMOs. ICCAT can contribute to it by publishing the IOMS source code containing the planned enhancements (data interoperability extensions) and the IOMS data itself (through web-services). These additional funds will be beneficial to ICCAT, as more human resources would allow a faster development of the system.

*Proposed budget:* \$US 499,950 provided by GEF and \$US 2,127,522 as ICCAT Secretariat in-kind contribution.

*Duration:* 5 years

**Capsule 3: Ecosystem-based operating models**

*Objective:* To validate indicators and management policies to advance the Ecosystem-Based-Approach to Fisheries Management (EBFM).

*Brief description of activities to be developed by ICCAT:* Add a module, called Ecotest, to existing analytical software packages (DLMtool and OpenMSE) that allows for the simulation of ecosystem dynamics so that indicators and policy measures can be formally and rigorously evaluated. This could be used to identify both new indicators and also establish the conditions under which indicators can be assumed to be operating reliably. Since the module could be developed within the existing MSETool/DLMTool packages, any management procedure already established for management (more than 100 management procedures and 50 fisheries) could be readily evaluated by EcoTest.

*Proposed budget:* \$US 200,000 provided by GEF and \$US 896,471 as ICCAT in-kind contribution.

*Duration:* 3 years

*Capsule 4:* **Technical support for harmonization of technical work between RFMOs**

*Objective:* To harmonize technical aspects among t-RFMOs that are considered essential for the provision of management advice to the Commission.

*Brief description of activities to be developed by ICCAT:* To identify and address common challenges in a harmonized manner, and for conveying key messages to civil society regarding progress in fisheries management. Specifically, to convene, support and conduct 3 Kobe process workshops designed to address topic issues already identified through the Kobe Steering Committee or others identified through additional Kobe Steering Committee discussions that can improve harmonization between t-RFMOs (e.g., observer or EMS data, HS/MSE, FAD, bycatch, etc.). The topic issues and contents of the 3 Kobe joint t-RFMO Workshops will be discussed, agreed and coordinated between the project implementers, FAO ABNJ Phase 2 Steering Committee, Kobe Steering Committee and RFMO Secretariat based on tuna RFMOs research and management priorities.

*Proposed budget:* \$US 360,000 provided by GEF and \$US 933,313 in in-kind contributions by the t-RFMOs (ICCAT Secretariat in-kind contribution to be determined).

*Duration:* 5 years