

**Summary Report of the
Seminar on High Seas Boarding and Inspection Schemes (HSBI) in the ICCAT Context**
(Vigo, Spain, 13-14 September 2023)

1. Welcome, introductions and seminar overview

The PWG Chair (facilitator) Mr Neil Ansell (EU), opened the Seminar on High Seas Boarding and Inspection Schemes (HSBI) in the ICCAT Context and welcomed participants.

Ms. Susan Steele, Executive Director of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) welcomed participants to Vigo and conveyed the importance of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and cooperation in Monitoring, Control and Surveillance measures to ensure a level playing field for the fishing industry.

The ICCAT Executive Secretary, Mr Camille Jean Pierre Manel, also welcomed participants, reinforced the value of sharing views during the Seminar that may assist ICCAT members in any future decision-making. He went on to introduce the 19 attending CPCs and Observers, including: Albania, Algeria, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, European Union (EU), Gabon, The Gambia, Guatemala, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Senegal, St Vincent and Grenadines, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK), the United States, and Venezuela. The Executive Secretary also introduced one intergovernmental organization i.e., Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), one non-governmental observer i.e., Pew Charitable Trusts (PEW) and an External expert from New Zealand.

The speaker Mr Juan Ignacio Gandarias Serrano, Director General of the General Directorate of Fisheries Management and Agriculture welcomed everyone and spoke on the threat of IUU fishing to fisheries and those who depend on them and emphasized the value of trust and dialogue in control measures to meet common objectives.

The facilitator summarized the agenda for the Seminar as highlighted in ICCAT Circular No. 3502 of 27 April 2023 and thanked the Seminar sponsors, namely the EU, Canada, the United States, the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) and the ICCAT Secretariat for its meeting support. He went on to underline the objectives of the Seminar to share experiences and best practices, increase inclusivity and address CPC concerns about the practicalities of HSBI schemes especially for developing CPCs with limited operational capacity. The facilitator underlined that the Seminar had no mandate to make recommendations to ICCAT, rather to promote discussions which may be useful for the ICCAT and its subsidiary bodies in any future deliberations.

The modified agenda was agreed with no additional changes (HSBI_02A/i2023) and is attached as **Appendix 1**. The list of participants is attached as **Appendix 2**.

The United States delegation volunteered to serve as rapporteur.

2. Tools to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and the role of HSBI schemes

Two presentations (by FAO and Canada) provided an overview of the role of HSBI schemes to combat IUU fishing. Discussions focused on the value of an integrated approach to countering IUU fishing including on the synergy between binding and non-binding global instruments (e.g., United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA)) as well as other regional instruments such as RFMO HSBI schemes. The facilitator also noted the link between port State inspections and HSBI and noted *Recommendation by ICCAT on port state measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (Rec. 18-09)* in the context of ICCAT. Some participants underlined the value of cooperation and collaboration to ensure a level playing field among CPCs, with opportunities for participation not limited exclusively to those with inspection assets.

3. HSBI schemes and experiences beyond the ICCAT Convention area

Presentations (by Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Secretariat, New Zealand and Canada) shared best practices on implementing HSBI and related control schemes associated with other RMFOs and member countries, including in WCPFC, New Zealand and in Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO). Information was shared on the operational aspects of these inspection schemes including lessons learned, data sharing, training and the importance of integration and information exchange related to port state measures.

Discussions included how various flag States adjudicate allegations of non-compliance and underlined the importance of active coordination between CPCs when organising and implementing at-sea inspection activities.

4. HSBI schemes and related control measures in the ICCAT Convention area

Presentations (from the ICCAT Secretariat and the US) focussed on inspection programs within the ICCAT Convention area in particular the ICCAT HSBI scheme for eastern bluefin tuna and Mediterranean swordfish and on the United States Coast Guard At-Sea Fisheries Inspection Partnerships.

Discussions focussed on cooperation, information exchange and other activities currently being performed by CPCs in the Convention area. It was noted that joint at-sea inspections have included a range of partners serving in a variety of roles varying from data analysis to port call hosts, observers, and shipriders using their sovereign authorities while on patrol vessels from another countries. In this regard, the importance of existing ICCAT mechanisms was noted that can assist in supplementing CPCs inspection capacity, in particular *Resolution by ICCAT amending the Resolution 18-11 by ICCAT establishing a pilot program for the voluntary exchange of inspection personnel in fisheries managed by ICCAT (Res. 19-17)*.

5. Panel 1 - Operational coordination and cooperation

Day two commenced with the establishment of two panels which would enter into more detailed discussions on operational and legal aspects of inspection activities.

The first panel consisted of active contributions from the UK, Albania and EFCA-EU including on risk assessment and inspection targeting, inspector exchanges experiences in GFCM, the model of the EU Joint Deployment Plan (JDP) and international framework for cooperation.

Presenters shared information regarding tactical planning both domestically and on the high seas using visual detection (air and surface assets) as well as remote sensing and satellite imagery; with patrols following a risk-based approach based on the fishery seasonality, target species, intelligence, and boarding opportunities. Furthermore, the experiences of pilot testing of inspection schemes including the inspector exchanges implemented throughout 2023 between Albania, Montenegro, Tunisia and the EU contributing to inclusiveness, enhanced CPC inspection capacity and as a platform for training and capacity building. The model of the EU Joint Deployment Plans was noted including the cooperation between EU Member States on data exchange/analysis, joint inspection/surveillance, pooling of inspection resources, standardization of procedures and the role of the Steering Group in planning, coordinating, reporting and evaluating all activities.

Discussion focussed on the merits of establishing a steering/working group in providing a transparent foundation for any possible further ICCAT discussions on an ICCAT HSBI scheme.

6. Panel 2 - Legal tools and technical assistance

The second panel consisted of presentations from the US, Morocco and Côte d'Ivoire including on specific legal tools and instruments, cooperation and actions of flag State in inspection activities and regional initiatives and the contributions to capacity building in inspection activities.

Presenters shared information on the legal tool kit available for countries to enter into agreements to provide for joint patrols, including bilateral agreements and shiprider provisions that respect countries sovereignty and provide a platform for inspections in order to augment inspection capacity and where information collected is provided to the flag State for further adjudication.

There was reference to existing ICCAT conservation and management measures as to the role of the flag State in facilitating control and inspection activities including *Res. 19-17* and *Recommendation by ICCAT to establish a process for the review and reporting of compliance information* (Rec. 08-09), *Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 18-08 on establishing a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities* (Rec. 21-13), *Recommendation by ICCAT replacing Supplemental Recommendation 21-02 extending and amending Recommendation 17-02 for the conservation of North Atlantic swordfish* (Rec. 22-03), *Recommendation by ICCAT concerning the duties of Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties, Entities, or Fishing Entities in relation to their vessels fishing in the ICCAT Convention area* (Rec. 03-12) and notably to the experiences of the BFT-E HSBI scheme under *Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 21-08 establishing a Multi-annual Management Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean* (Rec. 22-08). Finally, examples of regional initiatives were noted between West African CPCs to combat IUU fishing including on Joint Maritime Control Patrols in the Gulf of Guinea which noted the importance of capacity building and participatory needs of developing CPCs.

7. Looking forward - ICCAT Joint Scheme of International Inspection

Following some final discussions and reflections, the facilitator summarized some key points raised during Seminar, notably:

- IUU fishing undermines nations' sovereignty, compromises fisheries sustainability, and has global impacts. Countering IUU fishing is a common goal, noting however that no one entity can accomplish that alone.
- At-sea inspection is just one tool in an RFMO or CPCs monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) toolbox, in which complementarity is needed between the various tools (e.g., port inspections, observers, vessel monitoring system (VMS), IUU listing, sightings, etc.).
- Many examples exist of at-sea inspection schemes, programmes, experience and tools including joint patrol planning, intelligence collection/analysis and legal governance structures within ICCAT and other RFMOs. Such activities are focused on collecting evidence, gathering information and sharing information with flag CPC authorities.
- Capacity for inspection activities (human, technical and financial) are not uniform across ICCAT CPCs and capacity sharing and inclusiveness are essential.
- An ICCAT-supported integrated platform of standardized processes and procedures (e.g., inspection manuals, accreditation, curriculum, standards for inspection and case evidence) would be useful to support implementation of high sea inspections schemes notably by enhancing transparency and inclusiveness.
- Ensuring equity among CPCs to participate in HSBI activities is crucial, noting the different types/levels of involvement (planning, exchange of inspectors, defining priorities and evaluating activities).
- An HSBI Working Group; or expansion of an existing related ICCAT Working Group would be important as a platform for supporting the implementation of HSBI, including for discussing on common planning, exchanges of operational experiences and organising inspector exchanges and follow-up.

8. Concluding remarks and closure

The Commission Chair, Mr Ernesto Penas, attended the closing session and in his closing remarks stressed the importance of the Seminar and its contribution to further discussions on this subject in the 2023 Annual meeting based on the discussions and interventions made by CPCs during the previous year's annual meeting.

Given time constraints and the nature of the Seminar, the facilitator indicated that he would draft, with the assistance of the rapporteur, a brief report for submitting to Permanent Working Group for the Improvement of ICCAT Statistics and Conservation Measures (PWG). Electronic version of their presentations would be posted on the Seminar's ICCAT website.

The facilitator thanked everyone for their active contributions and noted particular appreciation to the CPCs who supported the Seminar, the untiring efforts by the ICCAT Secretariat and the interpreters and adjourned the Seminar.

Annotated Agenda [HSBI_02A/i2023]

***Day 1: Introductions, exchange of experiences and objectives of
high seas boarding and inspection (HSBI) schemes
(09.30 – 17.00)***

09.30-10.30:

1. Welcome, introductions and seminar overview

2. Seminar group photo

10.30-11.00

- *Coffee break*

11.00-13.30

3. Tools to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and the role of HSBI schemes

- Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) and the role of inspection and control schemes in the fight against IUU fishing
 - Ester Boy Carmona (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO)
- The international framework for HSBI schemes
 - Canada

4. HSBI schemes and experiences beyond the ICCAT Convention Area

- Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) HSBI Scheme
 - Lara Manarangi-Trott and Eidre Sharp, WCPFC Secretariat (online)
- New Zealand regional experiences
 - Andrew Wright (Ministry of Primary Industries Fisheries, New Zealand)
- North Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) HSBI scheme
 - Canada

13.30-15.00

- Lunch

15.00-16.00

5. HSBI schemes and related control measures in the ICCAT Convention area

- ICCAT HSBI scheme for Eastern Bluefin tuna and Mediterranean Swordfish
 - ICCAT Secretariat
 - EU-Italy
- United States Coast Guard At-Sea Fisheries Inspection Partnerships
 - United States

16.00-16.30

- *Coffee break*

16.30-17.30

6. Questions and general discussions

- Questions and discussions by facilitator
- Summary remarks/take aways

20.00

Cocktail reception/dinner - Musee del Mar (details to be announced)

Day 2: Technical engagement sessions

(09.30 – 16.30)

09.30 – 11.30

7. First Panel – Operational coordination and cooperation

- Risk assessment and inspection targeting
 - UK
- Regional experience and Inspector exchanges performed in General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) Pilot Projects
 - Albania
- The EU Joint Deployment Plan (JDP) and international framework for cooperation
 - EU (European Fisheries Control Agency, EFCA)

Presentations and moderated questions to panel and floor and discussion

11.30-12.00

- *Coffee break*

12.00-13.30

8. Second Panel – Legal tools and technical assistance

- Combating IUU Fishing - Legal Tools and Instruments
 - United States
- Cooperation and actions of flag state in inspection activities
 - Morocco
- Regional initiatives and the contributions of HSBI schemes to capacity building
 - Côte d'Ivoire

Presentations and moderated questions to panel and floor and discussion

13.30-15.00

- Lunch

15.00-16.30 (followed by coffee)

9. Looking forward – ICCAT Joint Scheme of International Inspection

- Moderated questions to floor and open discussion

10. Concluding remarks and close

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