

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE
CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS



COMMISSION INTERNATIONALE POUR LA
CONSERVATION DES THONIDES DE L'ATLANTIQUE

COMISION INTERNACIONAL PARA LA
CONSERVACION DEL ATUN ATLANTICO

Madrid, 4 February 2026

ICCAT CIRCULAR # 00723 / 2026

SUBJECT: CALL FOR TENDERS – CALIBRATION OF FISHING GEARS FOR SAMPLING OF WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN ALBACORE LARVAE

I should like to transmit a Call for Tenders for the *Calibration of fishing gears for sampling of western Mediterranean albacore larvae*, which will be carried out within the Atlantic Albacore Tuna Year Programme (ALBYP), in line with the SCRS workplan for this year.

I would be grateful if you could distribute this Call for Tenders to qualified people and institutions that may be interested.

ICCAT is kindly requesting a quotation for such work, which shall be developed according to the Terms of reference herein attached. The detailed offer shall be submitted **only to the attention of** the ICCAT Executive Secretary, [Mr Camille Jean Pierre Manel](#), and Cc'ing [Ms. Stasa Tensek](#), by **22 February 2026**.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Executive Secretary

Camille Jean Pierre Manel

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Attachment: Terms of Reference – Calibration of fishing gears for sampling of Western Mediterranean albacore larvae.

Terms of reference

Calibration of fishing gears for sampling of western Mediterranean albacore larvae

Background

The last assessment of Mediterranean albacore was highly sensitive to the larval abundance index for the western Mediterranean ([Anon., 2024](#)). Therefore, the SCRS identified that the calibration of gears (B60 and B90) for the sampling of larvae of Mediterranean albacore to be a high research priority in 2026. This index is based on a time series covering 2001–2022, during which two different fishing gears were applied:

- 1) Bongo 60 with a 333 μm mesh, sampled down to 70 m depth (2001–2005);
- 2) Bongo 90 with a 500 μm mesh, sampled down to 30 m depth (2012–2022) ([Tugores *et al.*, 2024](#)).

Differences in catchability between these two gears are currently standardized using an approach originally designed and calibrated for bluefin tuna larvae. The strongest decline in abundance detected by the larval index occurs between these two periods (2001–2005 vs. 2012–2022), which raises uncertainty as to whether this decline reflects a real population trend or an artefact of the change in sampling methodology.

Because this index has a strong influence on the stock assessment, it produced two contrasting scenarios depending on whether the time series was treated as continuous or split according to the fishing gear used. For this reason, the Mediterranean Albacore Species Group has requested a deeper investigation into the calibration between these two sampling strategies, in order to provide a stronger scientific basis for selecting among the current assessment scenarios ([Anon., 2024](#)).

Objective

The objectives of this activity are to:

- 1) process and analyse samples of experimental fishing designed to calibrate the two different larval fishing tactics, providing a Mediterranean albacore specific calibration method;
- 2) integrate the new calibration in the processing of the western Mediterranean albacore larval index.

Tasks to be developed

- Compile the bongo 90 and 60 samples of the experimental fishing campaign conducted in the western Mediterranean (i.e. Balearic Islands during 2019);
- Sort albacore larvae for those samples;
- Obtain standard length for all albacore larvae;
- Curate data on larvae catch and length distributions with fishing operation information (location, date, hour, volume filtered, tow depths and duration) and environmental information (temperature and salinity);
- Compare albacore larval abundances between the two fishing gears and develop a calibration approach.

Deliverables

1. **A draft final**, in the form of an SCRS document and related presentation, shall be submitted by **15 June 2026** and presented at the Albacore Stock Assessment Meeting that has been scheduled for 22-25 June 2026. The draft final report shall include:
 - a) Executive summary;
 - b) Full description of the work carried out;
 - c) Detailed description of final results achieved;
 - d) List of references and literature cited.

2. **A final report**, to be prepared taking into account any comments provided by the SCRS and the ICCAT Secretariat on the draft final report (Deliverable #2), and a full administrative report including a complete set of the documents concerning the expenses incurred under the contract, shall be submitted by **31 July 2026** at the latest.

Contractor minimum qualifications

- Documented multi-year experience in albacore tuna research and/or research on large pelagic species with experience in larval surveys.
- University degree in one of the following: fisheries science, marine biology, statistics, natural sciences, biological sciences, environmental sciences, or closely related fields (in the case of individual scientists).
- Excellent working knowledge of one of the three official languages of ICCAT (English, French or Spanish). A high level of knowledge of English is desirable.

Submission of proposals

The proposals should be developed according to these Terms of Reference. The detailed offer shall be submitted only to the attention of the Executive Secretary of ICCAT, Mr Camille Jean Pierre Manel (camille.manel@iccat.int) and Cc'ing Ms. Stasa Tensek (stasa.tensek@iccat.int), by **22 February 2026** (18:00, Madrid time), and shall include:

- a) i) a detailed description of the activities to be carried out; and ii) detailed (breakdown) budget, including unitary costs (if applicable).
- b) The Curriculum vitae of the tenderer (in the case of individual scientists) and of any collaborator (subcontractor).
- c) The Curriculum vitae of the institution (if an institution is the service provider), with any documented experience in reproductive studies.
- d) The name, address, and telephone number of the tendering person/entity.
- e) The institutional and administrative background of the tendering person/body (e.g. statutes, type of institution, annual budget, budget control procedures, etc. (if applicable)).
- f) A list of any relevant subcontracting activities.
- g) The declaration that the offering person/entity shall follow the ICCAT procedures and formats for data to be provided.
- h) A declaration that all the comments eventually made by the ICCAT Secretariat will be incorporated prior to submission into the final report.
- i) Acknowledgment of this Call for Tenders.
- j) A statement specifying the extent of agreement with all terms, conditions and provisions included in these Terms of Reference.

For further information concerning this Call for Tenders, please contact the ICCAT Secretariat at the following address: miguel.santos@iccat.int.

Selection of proposal(s)

The ICCAT Secretariat will review the offer(s). Following the review process, the ICCAT Executive Secretary will notify the entity selected for the contract as soon as the selection process is completed. The contract will be awarded based on competitive tendering. The evaluation of proposals will be undertaken objectively, consistently and without bias towards particular suppliers. Proposal(s) will be evaluated against a pre-determined set of criteria, which include: (i) cost (30%); (ii) proven track record (30%); (iii) technical merit based on workplan including the bidder's qualifications (30%); and, (iv) flexibility towards future changes in requirements (10%).

Payment details

Disbursement will be made according to the following schedule:

- 60% of the total amount of the contract upon signing the contract and after receiving a regular invoice, which may be submitted at the latest **30 days after the signature** of the contract;
- 40% of the total amount of the contract, after the approval of the final report (**Deliverable #2**), and after receiving a regular invoice and the complete set of documents concerning the expenses incurred under the contract, no later than **31 July 2026**.

Logistics

All documents provided by the Contractor must be in MS Word or compatible software; tables must be in Excel format or compatible; figures and pictures must be in JPEG or TIFF format or compatible. All documents submitted must be in English.

Copyright

All the material produced by the Contractor will remain the property of the ICCAT, will be kept confidential, and cannot, in any case, be circulated by the Contractor. The scientific use of the data by the Contractor will always be notified to ICCAT in advance for clearance.

References

- Anonymous. 2024.** Report of the 2024 ICCAT Mediterranean Albacore Data Preparatory and Stock Assessment Meeting. Collect. Vol. Sci. Pap. ICCAT, 81(3): 1-120.
- Tugores M.P., Torres A.P., Martín M., Balbín R., Álvarez I., Santandreu M., Reglero P., Alvarez-Berastegui D. 2024.** Actualisation of albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) retro-calculated larval abundances in the western Mediterranean Sea (2001-2022). Collect. Vol. Sci. Pap. ICCAT, 81(3): 1-19.