

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, 22 May 2026

ICCAT CIRCULAR # 04102 / 2026

SUBJECT: CALL FOR TENDERS - CONTINUATION OF THE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES FOR AGE AND GROWTH OF TROPICAL TUNAS

I should like to transmit a Call for Tenders for the *Continuation of the collection and analysis of biological samples for age and growth of tropical tunas*, which will be carried out within the Tropical Tuna Research and Data Collection Programme (TTRaD), 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 3 June 2026.**

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Executive Secretary

Camille Jean Pierre Manel

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Attachment: Terms of Reference – Continuation of the collection and analysis of biological samples for age and growth of tropical tunas



Terms of Reference
Continuation of the collection and analysis of
biological samples for age and growth of tropical tunas

1. Introduction

Biological samples are required to quantify the age and growth of tropical tuna targeted in the Atlantic. This Terms of Reference aims to continue the collection of hard parts and biological samples from tropical tuna with a focus on gaps identified for upcoming assessments and in line with other programs of work that are underway including ITUNNES (Improving tropical TuNa biological knowledge for eNd-usErS). Target species include yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*, YFT), bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*, BET) and skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonis pelamis*, SKJ).

These ToR represents a continuation of age and growth studies. The activities will therefore include the collection and (where possible) processing of samples of YFT, BET and SKJ.

2. Contractor tasks

The Contractor will work in close consultation with the ICCAT Secretariat and will provide a detailed description of how work will be progressed on the continued collection and ageing of specimens of tropical tuna. Sampling should take advantage of data already collected, especially in under-sampled areas (including the West Atlantic and Central East Atlantic). Specific size classes of interest are summarised below by species, noting that these size classes will be reviewed in June 2026 following the Tropical Tuna workshop on age and growth:

- For BET, the work should focus on age/length sampling of tuna ≤ 30 cm SFL (straight fork length) and > 120 cm SFL.
- For SKJ, the work should focus on improving the overall database of age/length samples with a focus on age/length sampling of tuna ≤ 30 cm and > 60 cm (straight fork length).
- For YFT, the work should focus on age/length sampling of tuna > 120 cm SFL (straight fork length).

All samples should be processed and where feasible analysed (ageing and determination of growth curves by sex) to develop updates for presentation to the SCRS. Where results are available, and to ensure that outputs are effectively integrated with wider programs of work, there should be coordinated discussions with teams involved in analysis of tropical tuna age and growth in the Atlantic (for example ITUNNES) ahead of relevant species group meetings.

Where possible, the Contractor shall ensure that biological sampling and analysis is conducted regionally. As such, tenders should be made on a regional and collaborative basis by consortia, other than applications by single institutions or individuals.

The working proposal and the Contractor should be responsible for the following:

a) Routine hard part collection

- Collection of otoliths (and spines/vertebrae where available) with a focus on under-represented sizes and areas for the three species.



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- Provide a detailed description of the biological sampling scheme (biological sampling by regions, type of biological samples to be collected and analysed), number of fish to be sampled by sex and month if possible, taking into consideration the targets set out above.
- Follow the protocols contained in the [Chapter 4 of the ICCAT Manual](#) for the collection of samples and the suggestions made during the Workshop held in February 2020 for analysis of the growth data.
- The biological sampling period should be as long as possible, noting the contract duration. Therefore, the proposal should include the chronogram of activities and respective budget, a detailed description of the methodology to be used, the expected results for this analysis, and the full cost of the analyses. The minimum information to be reported includes the length-frequency of samples, fish metadata (date, location, etc.), age readings (calendar and fractional), age error matrices, and bias analyses (like Evans-Hoenig and Bowker symmetry tests) produced from testing their reads against the reference set.

b) Bigeye tuna, Yellowfin tuna and skipjack sample processing & analysis

- Using already available samples of including from other contractors (**Annex 1**), update the relationship between otoliths, spines, and vertebrae with the aim to reduce ageing differences in estimates across methodologies.
- Where available, update growth parameter estimates by sex
- Where available, update maximum age by sex
- Where available, assess differences in age estimates across methodologies that implies differences in parameter estimates even within geographically areas

c) Reporting

- Provide a report summarizing the results for work undertaken.

3. Contractor minimum qualifications

- Documented multi-year experience in tropical tunas research and/or research on large pelagic species with experience in fishery data collection and analysis.
- University degree in one of the following: fisheries science, marine biology, statistics, natural sciences, biological sciences, environmental sciences, or closely related fields (in 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.

4. Deliverables

Deliverable #1. A progress report, including final results of all species of yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna and skipjack sample processing and analyses to be prepared in a form of an SCRS document, shall be submitted by **7 September 2026** and presented at the Tropical Tunas Species Group Meeting (sometime between 14-19 September 2026).



Deliverable #2. A draft final document, to be prepared in a form of an SCRS document, shall be submitted by **1 December 2026** and include a:

- a) Executive summary;
- b) Full description of the work carried out;
- c) EXCEL file containing all the data related to the samples, as well as any related data regarding the processing and analysis of the samples;
- d) Detailed description of final results achieved;
- e) List of references and literature cited.

Deliverable #3. A final report, prepared taking into account all comments and revisions made by the relevant SCRS officers and the ICCAT Secretariat on draft final document (Deliverable #2), shall be provided by **31 December 2026**.

5. Payment details

Disbursement will be made according to the following schedule:

- 1) 40% of the total amount of the contract **upon signing** of the contract and after receiving a regular invoice which may be submitted at the latest 30 days after the signature of the contract;
- 2) 40% of the total amount of the contract upon receipt of the **Deliverable #1** (progress report), and after receiving a regular invoice.
- 3) 20% of the total amount of the contract, upon receipt and acceptance by the Secretariat of the **Deliverable #3** (final report), and after receiving a regular invoice and a complete set of documents concerning the expenses incurred under the contract, no later than **31 December 2026**.

6. Submission of proposals

The proposals should be developed according to the Terms of Reference herein attached. The detailed offer(s) shall be submitted only to the attention of **Mr. Camille Jean Pierre Manel** (camille.manel@iccat.int), the Executive Secretary of ICCAT, and Cc'ing Ms. Stasa Tensek (stasa.tensek@iccat.int), by **3 June 2026**, including:

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



7. Selection of proposals

The ICCAT Secretariat will make a revision of the offer(s). Following the revision process, the ICCAT Executive Secretary will notify the entity selected for the contract as soon as the selection process is completed. Contracts 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; (ii) proven track record; (iii) technical merit based on work plan including the bidder's qualifications; and, (iv) flexibility to future changes to requirements.

8. Logistics

All documents provided by the Contractor must be in open format such as MS word, figures 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.

Data must be provided in the standard ICCAT format for statistics. The biological data must be submitted in a format to be defined by the ICCAT Secretariat.

9. Copyright

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

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



Available samples for Tropical tuna species for processing (updated in December 2025)

Bigeye tuna	<29	30-49	50-64	65-79	80-99	100-114	115-129	130-149	150-169	>169
ToR 2024 priorities										
South-East Atlantic (Côte d'Ivoire)	0	5	7	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
North-East Atlantic (Sénégal)	0	22	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
South Atlantic (St Helena)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
TOTAL	0	27	10	1	1	0	0	1	4	3

Skipjack tuna	<29	30-49	50-64	65-79	80-99	100-114	115-129	130-149	150-169	>169
ToR 2024 priorities										
South-East Atlantic (Côte d'Ivoire)	0	61	24	4	0	0				
North-East Atlantic (Sénégal)	0	34	4	0	0	0				
South Atlantic (St Helena)	0	0	1	0	0	0				
TOTAL	0	95	29	4	0	0	0	0	0	0

Yellowfin tuna	<29	30-49	50-64	65-79	80-99	100-114	115-129	130-149	150-169	>169
ToR 2024 priorities										
South-East Atlantic (Côte d'Ivoire)	23	83	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North-East Atlantic (Sénégal)	0	5	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
South Atlantic (St Helena)	0	0	50	0						
TOTAL	23	88	95	1	0	0	1	0	0	0