

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF AN ONLINE REPORTING SYSTEM**

RECOGNIZING that ICCAT has adopted a significant number of measures that require CPCs to submit information in various formats and under different schedules;

RECOGNIZING that the work of ICCAT benefits from timely and transparent information sharing;

RECOGNIZING the developments in electronic information exchange and the benefits, to the Secretariat and ICCAT members, of rapid communication with regard to the processing, management, and distribution of information;

NOTING the implementation of electronic systems will facilitate reporting, which should help address reporting delays, reporting in the wrong format, and incomplete reporting experienced by ICCAT under its current reporting process;

DESIRING to find effective ways to reduce the workload on the Secretariat and enhance the effective functioning of ICCAT, including the Compliance Committee;

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE
CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. An online reporting system shall be developed and maintained at the ICCAT Secretariat covering ICCAT reporting requirements, with an initial focus on elements of the required CPC Annual Reports.
2. An Online Reporting Technology Working Group is established, in collaboration with the ICCAT Secretariat, to develop the plan for the online reporting system, based on the elements presented in **Annex 1**. The Working Group should specify what information the system will collect, the format and structure of the user interface, and the underlying technical specifications. In developing these elements, the Working Group should include a cost-benefit analysis of options for the development and maintenance of this system, with a priority on creating a simple, user-friendly system.
3. In carrying out the work specified in paragraph 2 above, the Working Group will determine which electronic reporting elements need to be undertaken by outsourced technical services and which can be developed by the Secretariat, based on experience and management of other existing systems, including open source solutions based on international UN/CEFACT standards, and taking into account information from other regional fisheries management organizations considering implementation of such systems.
4. This Working Group shall begin its work in 2017 with a completion goal of 2019. The Working Group will provide annual interim reports to the Commission on the progress of its work, including presenting its proposal for the content and format of the online reporting system to the Commission for its consideration in order to inform the development of the technical specifications referred to in paragraph 2.
5. Any interested CPCs are invited to participate and shall notify the Secretariat of the name of their Working Group participant by 15 January 2017. Participants identified should have knowledge and experience in the development and use of electronic, web-based reporting tools. The Working Group will select a chair from among its membership.
6. Once the online reporting system is established, training programs shall be developed and implemented to the extent possible through existing bilateral or broader capacity building and technical assistance programs, to ensure that CPCs utilize the system for a more efficient and effective reporting.

CONCEPT NOTE ON AN ICCAT ONLINE REPORTING SYSTEM

Purpose and Need

ICCAT has adopted a significant number of measures that require CPCs to submit data and reports in various formats and under different schedules. This information is typically submitted via electronic mail to the general intake address (info@iccat.int). This approach places a significant burden on the Secretariat to evaluate the received information and place it into the appropriate databases for scientific and/or administrative uses. Additionally, there is a heavy burden on the Secretariat to extract the information from numerous electronic files in order to produce required reports and communications in a timely manner, in particular reports to support the work of the Compliance Committee.

An online reporting system on the ICCAT website could provide CPCs with a unified and comprehensive approach to submitting information. The system could assist CPCs by providing a “single window” reporting and management tool for tracking and organizing their respective submissions. The online reporting system could replace the need to separately submit Annual Reports and, to the extent possible, many other periodic submissions to the Secretariat.

Such a system could address the persistent problem of lack of reporting and/or incomplete and late reporting that creates work for the Secretariat and that impedes the effective functioning of the Compliance Committee. Extracts of information made directly by CPCs from the online reporting system could replace several reports and documents now prepared by the Secretariat and help streamline the support to the Compliance Committee and other ICCAT Sub-committees. In addition, these extracts could be available to CPCs at any time and could facilitate advance and more effective preparation for the Compliance Committee or other ICCAT bodies.

Potential Features of a System

The system would be based on a relational database consisting of individual reporting elements. These data elements are, to a large extent, already well defined (see ICCAT Guidelines for submitting data and the list of reporting requirements).

The system would include integrated information on reporting elements indicating origin (ICCAT measure) and purpose, an explanation of the requirement, conditions of its applicability, and an indication of the format and due date.

Filtering criteria would be assigned to each reporting element to enable system queries of a particular focus. For example, filters could be developed to allow selection by:

- Associated Recommendation(s)/Resolution(s)
- Associated Species (BFT, SWO, ALB, etc.)
- Associated Subject (e.g., observers, vessels, MCS)
- Reporting period (year) and applicable due date
- Indication of whether the element contains legacy data or is an active requirement

Mode of Operation

The internet-based self-reporting would be accomplished by authorized CPC officials such as scientific and administrative correspondents. Password protected accounts would be assigned by the Secretariat and the system would have a self-service password reset.

An automated e-mail reminder could be sent to designated CPC officials when a reporting element is due/overdue.

The system would automatically record the CPC account that is used to enter/modify data and record dates of the original entry and most recent change for that reporting element on each annual cycle.

The CPC official would attach formatted files for loading into respective databases by Secretariat (e.g., Task I and Task II data, vessel lists). The Secretariat would record a CPC specific response in cases of incorrect/incomplete submission (system would record date of message).

The Secretariat could post messages for response by involved CPCs (e.g., VMS irregularities, observer PNC reports, inspection reports, submissions under Rec. 08-09) with automated e-mail notification of Secretariat queries to the individual CPCs.

The Secretariat would develop and post an online user manual and help request tool. The Secretariat staff would have administrator role to assist/modify records when needed.

An extract tool would allow CPCs to generate reports (at any time) according to selected filtering criteria (due date, associated species, subject, CPCs indicating not applicable, etc.).

The system would be automatically locked from further changes to that year's reporting requirement during the annual meeting/after the annual meeting/at the end of the calendar year.

Benefits

An online reporting system would reduce workload and streamline the process for the Secretariat's compilation of information (direct submissions through online reporting system rather than collate information submitted in emails).

The system would enforce formats and completeness of response (e.g., reporting that a measure is not applicable requires explanation).

Access to structured, specific extracts would facilitate work of the Compliance Committee in assessing status of each CPC prior to meeting; the system would provide a harmonized real time and historical record of reporting status by measure, by subject area, etc.

Such online systems promote transparency through access to extracts (similar to queries on conservation measures and authorized vessel list).

Costs to Consider

- Database development and user interface, including new reporting elements when new measures adopted and deactivation of legacy reporting elements when measures replaced/rescinded
- Online user guide and training tools
- Operations and maintenance costs