

CONCEPT NOTE ON AN ICCAT ONLINE REPORTING SYSTEM

(Submitted by the United States)

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 monitor thousands of emails annually, and 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 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 to support the Compliance Committee. In addition, these extracts could be available to CPCs at any time and could facilitate advance and more effective preparation for the Compliance Committee.

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.)

A “pop-up” window for each reporting element would have a brief description of its origin (ICCAT measure) and purpose, an explanation of the requirement and the conditions of its applicability, and an indication of the format and due date. These details are largely already available.

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 1 and Task 2 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.).

Benefits

Reduced workload for Secretariat to compile information (direct submissions through online reporting system rather than collate information submitted in emails).

System-enforced formats and completeness of response (e.g., reporting that a measure is not applicable requires explanation).

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

Promotes transparency through access to extracts (similar to queries on conservation measures and authorized vessel list).

Costs

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- Deactivation of legacy reporting elements when measures replaced/rescinded