

2018 ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT¹

1 Introduction

In accordance with Article VII of the Convention, this report is presented by the Secretariat to the Commission to outline its activities during financial year 2018.

2 Contracting Parties to the Convention and Cooperators

2.1 Contracting Parties

At 15 October 2018, the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) is comprised of the following 52 Contracting Parties: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Cape Verde, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Curaçao, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, European Union, France (St. Pierre & Miquelon), Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea (Rep.) Guinea Bissau, Honduras, Iceland, Japan, Korea (Rep.), Liberia, Libya, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Russia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Syrian Arab Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom (Overseas Territories), United States, Uruguay, Vanuatu and Venezuela.

2.2 Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities

In addition to the status of Contracting Party, the Commission can also grant the status of cooperator in accordance with the procedure provided in the *Recommendation by ICCAT on criteria for attaining the status of Cooperating non-Contracting party, entity or fishing entity* (Rec. 03-20). Bolivia, Costa Rica, Guyana, Suriname and Chinese Taipei hold this status.

3 ICCAT Recommendations and Resolutions

Adoption and entry into force of the Recommendations and Resolutions

On 11 December 2017, the Secretariat officially transmitted the texts of the Recommendations and Resolutions adopted at the 25th Regular Meeting of the Commission (Marrakesh, Morocco, 14 to 21 November 2017) to the Contracting Parties and to non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities that have Atlantic coastlines or that fish tunas in the Convention area, and to intergovernmental fishery organizations, requesting their cooperation in this regard.

The texts of the Recommendations and Resolutions adopted by the Commission in 2017 were published in the *Report for Biennial Period 2016-2017, Part II (2017), Vol. 1*.

Following notification, the Secretariat received the following correspondence which was circulated to all the Contracting Parties:

- Norway's objection to the *Recommendation by ICCAT amending the Recommendation 14-04 on bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean* (Rec. 17-07).

Following the six-month grace period after the transmission of the Recommendations and Resolutions adopted by the Commission, the Recommendations entered into force on 11 June 2018, except (Rec. 17-07) which did so on 10 August 2018 in accordance with Article VIII, paragraph 3 (a) of the ICCAT Convention.

¹ Information at 15 October 2018.

4 ICCAT inter-sessional meetings and Working Groups

In accordance with Commission decisions in this regard, the following meetings were held in 2018:

- Intersessional Meeting of Panel 2 (*Madrid, Spain, 5 to 7 March 2018*)
- Blue Marlin Data Preparatory Meeting (*Madrid, Spain, 12 to 16 March 2018*)
- Meeting of the Online Reporting Technology Working Group (*Madrid, Spain, 26 to 27 March 2018*)
- Small Tunas Species Group Intersessional Meeting (*Madrid, Spain, 2 to 6 April 2018*)
- Meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Monitoring Measures (IMM) (*Madrid, Spain, 9 to 12 April 2018*)
- MSE (bluefin tuna and North Atlantic swordfish) (*Madrid, Spain, 16 to 20 April 2018*)
- Bigeye Tuna Data Preparatory Meeting (*Madrid, Spain, 23 to 27 April 2018*)
- Meeting of the Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods (*Madrid, Spain, 7 to 11 May 2018*)
- Meeting of the Standing Working Group to Enhance Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers (SWGSM) (*Funchal, Portugal, 21 to 23 May 2018*)
- Meeting of the Working Group on Convention Amendment (*Funchal, Portugal, 24 to 25 May 2018*)
- Intersessional Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Ecosystems (*Madrid, Spain, 4 to 8 June 2018*)
- Blue Marlin Stock Assessment Meeting (*Miami, United States, 18 to 22 June 2018*)
- Intersessional Meeting of the Sharks Species Group (*Madrid, Spain, 2 to 6 July 2018*)
- Bigeye Tuna Stock Assessment Meeting (*Pasaia, Spain, 16 to 20 July 2018*)
- Intersessional Meeting of Panel 1 (*Bilbao, Spain, 23 to 25 July 2018*)
- Meeting of the Port Inspection Expert Group for Capacity Building and Assistance (*Madrid, Spain, 18 to 19 September 2018*)
- SCRS Species Groups Meeting (Sub-committee on Statistics 24-25 September) (*Madrid, Spain, 24 to 28 September 2018*)
- Meeting of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) (*Madrid, Spain, 1 to 5 October 2018*)

5 Meetings at which ICCAT was represented

Within the framework of ICCAT's mandate to inform other international organizations of the measures adopted by the Commission, the Secretariat participated in several meetings and technical consultation processes, which included several regional fisheries organizations (see **Annex 1** to this Report (**STF-201/2018-Annex 1**), which summarizes the main issues discussed at these meetings).

- Tuna Compliance Network – TCN (5 Tuna RFMOs) 2nd Workshop (extended to other RFMOs) (*Honiara, Solomon Islands*) 15-18 February
- Meeting regarding the organisation of the Intergovernmental Conference to Establish a binding legal instrument on biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (*New York, United States*) 16-18 April
- Meeting of Joint Working Group between NEAFC and OSPAR to review the prospect of establishing a protected marine area in the East Atlantic (*Berlin, Germany*) 7-8 May
- World Trade Organization (Workshop on Stock Assessment) (*Geneva, Switzerland*) 11 June
- The Second Joint Tuna RFMO MSE Working Group (*Seattle, United States*) 13 to 15 June
- OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic Meeting of the OSPAR Commission (*Paris, France*) 26 June
- 33rd Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (*Rome, Italy, 9 to 13 July 2018*)
- Regional Fisheries Body Secretariats' Network (RSN) (*Rome, Italy*) 7 and 13 July
- Kobe Steering Committee Meeting (*Rome, Italy*) 11 July
- Fifth Project Steering Committee (PSC) of the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project (*Rome, Italy*) 16-18 July
- 10th Regular Session of the Conference of Ministers of the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic (ATLAFCO/COMHAFAT) (*Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire*). 26-28 August

- The Informal Operating Model and Management Procedure Technical Meeting (Informal OMMP), and The Extended Scientific Committee for the 23rd Meeting of the Scientific Committee (ESC 23), CCSBT (*San Sebastián, Spain*). 2-4 September
- Working Group (WG2) on pelagics – ICCAT, MEDAC Mediterranean Advisory Council (*Rome, Italy*). 11 October

Since joining the Secretariat in July 2018, the Executive Secretary has been visiting the representations of ICCAT CPCs in Madrid (Spain). As of October 15, he has held meetings with the representatives of Albania, Algeria, Cabo Verde, China (People's Rep.), Croatia, Egypt, Gabon, Guatemala, Honduras, Korea (Rep.), Libya, Morocco, Panama, Russia, Senegal, Syria, Tunisia, Uruguay, as well as the Economy and Cultural Office of Chinese Taipei.

6 Tagging lottery

General ICCAT tagging programmes

National laboratories give awards or prizes to people who recover tags to encourage the return of tags. In order to support these programmes, ICCAT organizes an annual lottery with a \$500 prize.

In the last ICCAT lottery, which was held on 1 October 2018, prizes were awarded for three tags for each of the following categories: small tunas, sharks and billfish, respectively.

The winning tags were as follows:

- *Small tunas*: The tag ATP120584 was recovered from a little tunny (*Euthynnus alletteratus/LTA*) by a citizen from Côte d'Ivoire, 13 days after it was attached. The tagging was carried out during Côte d'Ivoire campaigns.
- *Sharks*: The tag 346876 was recovered from a shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus/SMA*) by a Spanish citizen. The tagging was carried out during the United States campaigns.
- *Billfish*: The tag SEC011002 was recovered from a Mediterranean spearfish (*Tetrapturus belone/MSP*) by an Italian citizen.

There was no award this year for the category of temperate tunas as the tags reported were not recoveries.

Atlantic-wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna (GBYP)

Again this year, an additional draw was held with the support of the ICCAT Atlantic-wide Research Programme on Bluefin Tuna (GBYP). This lottery has three awards (two for €500 and one for €1000) exclusively for recoveries of bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus/BFT*). The winning tags and the awards were as follows:

- €1,000: the tag AAA007176 was recovered by a Spanish citizen, 977 days after it had been attached. The tagging was carried out during the Spanish campaigns.
- €500: the tag BYP022147 was recovered by a Croatian citizen.
- €500: the tag BYP074548 was recovered by a Maltese citizen.

Atlantic Ocean Tropical Tuna Tagging Programme (AOTTP)

Again this year, an additional draw was held with the support of the ICCAT Atlantic Ocean Tropical tuna Tagging Programme (AOTTP). This carries a prize of €500 for each of the main species in the tropicals category. The winning tags and the awards were as follows:

- Bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus/BET*): The tag ATP039361 was recovered by a citizen of Côte d'Ivoire, 228 days after it had been attached. The tagging was carried out during the Spanish campaigns.

- Skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*/SKJ): The tag ATP074777 was recovered by a Spanish citizen. The tagging was carried out during the Portuguese campaigns.
- Yellowfin (*Thunnus albacares*/YFT): The tag ATP039400 was recovered by a Senegalese citizen, 128 days after it was attached. The tagging was carried out during the Spanish campaigns.

7 Letters concerning compliance with budgetary obligations

In early 2018, the Executive Secretary notified all the Contracting Parties of the amount of their contributions to the 2018 budget. In July 2018, a reminder was sent to the Contracting Parties that had not made the corresponding payments. Later, a second reminder was sent in September to those Contracting Parties that had not acted. The following table summarizes the correspondence sent to the Contracting Parties that have outstanding contributions.

	<i>First reminder Letter of 18 July 2018</i>	<i>Second reminder Letter of 24 September 2018</i>
Angola	X	X
Brazil	X	X
Cabo Verde	X	X
Côte d'Ivoire	X	
Curaçao	X	X
Egypt	X	X
Ghana	X	X
Grenada	X	X
Guinea-Bissau	X	
Guinea Ecuatorial	X	X
Guinea (Rep.)	X	X
Honduras	X	X
Iceland	X	
Liberia	X	X
Libya	X	X
Mauritania	X	X
Namibia	X	X
Nigeria	X	X
Panama	X	X
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	X	X
Sao Tomé and Príncipe	X	X
Senegal	X	X
Sierra Leone	X	X
Syria (Arab Rep.)	X	X
South Africa	X	
Turkey	X	
UK (Overseas Territories)	X	X
Uruguay	X	X
Venezuela	X	X

8 Publications of the Secretariat - 2018

In 2018, the following publications were issued:

- Report for Biennial Period 2016-17, Part II (2017), Vols. 1, 2, 3 and 4: English (Vols. 3 and 4 in electronic format only).

- Report for Biennial Period 2016-17, Part II (2017), Vols. 1, 2, 3, and 4: French (Vols. 3 and 4 in electronic format only).
- Report for Biennial Period 2016-17, Part II (2017), Vols. 1, 2, 3, and 4: Spanish (Vols. 3 and 4 in electronic format only).
- Statistical Bulletin, Vol. 44, which includes the catch series by species and country from 1950 to 2016. Starting in 2013, the paper copy has been issued biennially, with annual updates which are available in electronic format, on the ICCAT web site.
- Collective Volume of Scientific Papers, Vol. 75, comprised three volumes. The publication is available on the ICCAT web site.
- ICCAT Newsletter (February and September 2018).

9 Organisation and management of the Secretariat staff

9.1 Organisation

The Secretariat is organised as follows:

Executive Secretary

Mr. Camille Jean Pierre Manel. On 1 July 2018, Mr. Manel took up office as ICCAT Executive Secretary. He is responsible for selection and administration of the staff of the Commission and overseeing execution of the main functions of the Commission, such as:

- Coordination of research programmes
- Preparation of budget estimates for review by the Commission
- Authorising disbursement of funds according to the Commission's budget
- Accounting of the Commission's funds
- Preparation of coordination with sister organisations
- Collecting the necessary fishing statistics
- Preparation of scientific, administrative and other reports

Assistant Executive Secretary

Dr Miguel Neves dos Santos. Reporting directly to the Executive Secretary, he performs all the tasks delegated to him by the Executive Secretary, which include management of the Secretariat and representation of the ICCAT Secretariat at meetings of a technical and/or administrative nature. In addition, he performs the functions of scientific coordinator, carrying out tasks related to the coordination of research programmes, collection of fisheries statistics, preparation of reports and coordination with closely relation organisations. He is in charge of the Department of Translation and Publications and coordination of work between the Department of Research and Statistics and the Compliance Department. He is also responsible for coordination between the Secretariat and the SCRS and preparation of SCRS meetings and management of Commission meeting documents. Finally, he has assumed the role of coordinator of the ICCAT/Japan Capacity-Building Assistance Improvement Project (JCAP) since the departure of the previous coordinator (Ms. Mari Mishima) in August 2016.

Department of Research and Statistics

By reason of its mandate to manage and conserve tuna fishery resources, ICCAT members carry out a broad range of scientific research and monitoring activities. The Secretariat is directly involved in the coordination of some of these activities, although a large part of the practical work is carried out by the Contracting Parties. The Secretariat maintains a large number of databases that include information on fishery statistics which are useful for stock assessments as well as compliance records. The main tasks that are carried out are requests for data, rules for data transmission, development of databases, user interfaces of the databases, quality control of data, data mining and publication of data, management of the web site, tagging inventory, preparation of reports and coordination with the SCRS and management of information technology.

The research and statistics activities, under the supervision of the Scientific Coordinator, are carried out by the Head of Department and Fisheries Data Analyst, a Population Dynamics Expert, a By-catch Coordinator, a Biostatistician, two Database Programmers, a Programming Technician and a VMS Program Manager and a information technology specialist. Dr Mauricio Ortiz is Head of the Department of Research and Statistics and a Fisheries Data Analyst. He is in charge of the activities relating to the analysis of tuna and tuna-like species data contained in the ICCAT databases. Dr Ai Kimoto is in charge of the activities related to coordination with the SCRS regarding stock assessments and other scientific matters. Dr Nathan Taylor is the By-catch Coordinator. Mr. Carlos Palma is responsible for activities related to the creation and maintenance of databases. Mr. Carlos Mayor performs tasks related to programming and development of databases, Mr. Juan Carlos Muñoz is the Database Programmer, Mr. Juan Luis Gallego is the Programming Technician, Mr. Alberto Parrilla is the VMS Program Manager and Mr. Jesús Fiz is the Information Technology Specialist.

Compliance Department

In recent years, the Commission has adopted an increasing number of Recommendations and Resolutions that require CPCs to communicate various types of information such as vessels lists, compliance reports, etc. The Compliance Department compiles and distributes a large volume of information. The Department's main tasks are: preparation of the compliance tables; implementation of the Regional Observer Programme for transshipment and for bluefin tuna; maintenance of the vessels lists; the inventory of vessel chartering agreements; bluefin tuna farming reports; data and validation of the ICCAT Statistical Document Programs and the Bluefin Tuna Catch Documentation Programs; compendia of the management regulations; requests for cooperating status; requests for observer status; Annual Reports, and queries regarding compliance. The department is comprised of Ms. Jenny Cheatle, Head of Department, Ms. Carmen Ochoa, and Mr. M'Hamed Idrissi, as Compliance Coordinators, and Ms. Aldana Vieito, as the Compliance Assistant.

Department of Translation and Publications

The Department of Translation and Publications carries out tasks related to the compilation, adoption, translation and publication of circulars, reports and scientific documents, ASFA and FIRMS entries, in the three official languages of the Commission, the coordination of peer reviews of scientific documents, and publications in electronic format, communications and design of the web site. The department is coordinated by the Assistant Executive Secretary, Dr Neves dos Santos, and is comprised of six translators: Ms. Rebecca Campoy, Ms. Karen Donovan (English), Ms. Christine Peyre, Ms. Dorothee Pinet (French), Ms. María Isabel de Andrés and Ms. María José García-Orad (Spanish).

Department of Finance and Administration

This Department carries out all the administrative and financial tasks of the Secretariat. Its main tasks are: preparation and control of the budget, accounting, preparation of the administrative and financial reports, organisation of ICCAT meetings, management of special funds, human resources within the Secretariat, purchases, travel, reception, archives, management of contact information, inventory of the library and publications, photocopying, scanning and mail. The department is comprised of eight members: Mr. Juan Antonio Moreno, Head of Department, who coordinates all the tasks related to the department, Mr. Cristóbal García (photocopying and library), Mr. Pablo Herranz (Administrative Assistant), Ms. Africa Martín (Accounting Assistant), Ms. Ana Martínez (Accounting Assistant), Mr. Juan Angel Moreno (photocopying and mail), Ms. Esther Peña (Administrative Secretary) and Ms. Gisela Porto (Administrative Assistant to the Executive Secretary).

Atlantic-wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna (GBYP)

The overall aim of the programme, which began in January 2010, is to improve the scientific basis for decision making in relation to management of bluefin tuna in the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. The programme includes a list of actions, to be carried out over several years, such as recovery of basic data collections, improvement of knowledge on key biological and ecological processes or improvement of assessment models and provision of scientific advice. The programme is implemented by Dr Francisco Alemany (Coordinator), Ms. Stasa Tensek (Assistant Coordinator) and Mr. Alfonso Pagá (Database Specialist).

Atlantic Ocean Tropical Tuna Tagging Programme (AOTTP)

The aims of the programme, which began in 2015, are to contribute to data compilation and improve information for tropical tuna stock assessments, in order to provide sound scientific advice on management of these tuna species. The programme will collect, compile and analyse tagging data and tag recovery for the most important tropical tuna species in the Atlantic, such as skipjack, bigeye and yellowfin. The objective is to tag at least 120,000 species over five years with conventional and electronic tags. The activities carried

out include chartering of professional fishing vessels, deployment of tag placement and recovery teams, data collection, scientific interpretation, development and running of training courses and promotion of awareness campaigns to promote tag recoveries. The following people have been hired to implement these activities: Dr Doug Beare (Coordinator), Dr Lisa Ailloud (Assistant Coordinator), Mr. Jesús García (Database and Website Specialist), Ms. Seynabou Kebe (Administrative and Financial Officer) and Mr. Ricardo Pastor (Accountant).

9.2 New appointments

In July 2018, Mr. Camille Jean Pierre Manel joined the Secretariat as the ICCAT Executive Secretary, following his election at the 2018 Commission meeting, and expiry of the term of office of Mr. Driss Meski.

In May 2018, Dr Ai Kimoto was hired as the Populations Dynamics Expert, the position vacated by Dr Laurence Kell following his separation from service due to retirement. In addition, in July 2018, Dr Nathan Taylor joined the Secretariat as the By-catch Coordinator, following the departure of Dr Paul de Bruyn.

Atlantic-wide Research Programme for Bluefin Tuna (GBYP)

In February 2018, Dr Francisco Alemany was hired as the Programme Coordinator, following the separation from service due to retirement of Dr Antonio Di Natale.

Atlantic Ocean Tropical Tuna Tagging Programme (AOTTP)

In July 2018, Dr Lisa Ailloud was hired as the Assistant Coordinator of the programme.

10 Staff Regulations and Rules

10.1 Proposal by the Secretariat to amend the Staff Regulations and Rules

Following approval in 2017 of amendment of Article 33, which extended the retirement age of staff members, the Secretariat has amended Article 22 for the purposes of consistency. The new wording of this article is as follows:

22.1 "Appointments shall not be granted to persons under 18 years of age or over the mandatory retirement age of 65 ~~62~~."

11 Other matters

11.1 Management of other programmes

It should be noted that the Financial Report contains detailed information on these programmes and funds.

Since 2005, the United States has contributed to the Special Data Fund established in accordance with the *Resolution by ICCAT on Improvements in Data Collection and Quality Assurance* (Res. 03-21), to assist scientists from developing countries in participating in the meetings of the Scientific Committee. The two contributions received in 2018 were for €41,332.56 and €17,260.00.

In 2006, the United States made a contribution to help establish the Fund to Prohibit Driftnets so as to encourage compliance with the *Recommendation by ICCAT Relating to Mediterranean Swordfish* (Rec. 03-04). Since all CPCs have implemented the recommendation, the United States decided to destine the carryover to support the assessment of the impact of ICCAT fisheries on sea turtles in accordance with the *Recommendation by ICCAT amending Recommendation 10-09 on the by-catch of sea turtles in ICCAT fisheries* (Rec. 13-11). The balance currently stands at €2,400.63.

In April 2016, the contract was extended with the Consortium MRAG/CapFish for the ICCAT Regional Observer Program, in compliance with *Recommendation by ICCAT on a Programme for Transshipment* (Rec. 12-06). This program was financed in 2018 by voluntary contributions from Belize, China (People's Rep.), Côte d'Ivoire, Japan, Korea, Senegal, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Chinese Taipei; the programme continues to be managed by the Secretariat.

To implement the provisions of the *Recommendation by ICCAT Amending the Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish a Multi-Annual Recovery Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean (Rec. 08-05)*, in 2009 the Regional Observer Program for bluefin tuna was established. For this purpose, in April 2018, the contract with the Consortium MRAG/COFREPECHE was extended for hiring and deployment of observers. During this period, vessels, farms and traps have participated, and their operators have financed the programme.

Since 2008, the United States has made numerous contributions to the United States Fund for Capacity Building for developing countries. This fund currently has a balance of €249,251.57.

At its 16th Special Meeting (Marrakesh, Morocco, 17 to 24 November 2008), the Commission endorsed a five-year coordinated Atlantic-wide bluefin tuna research program (known as GBYP-ICCAT). Currently, the Program is in its eighth phase. The European Union is financing 80.00% of this amount and the remainder is funded through voluntary contributions from Canada, China (People's Rep.), Iceland, Japan, Korea, Morocco, United States, Tunisia, Turkey and Chinese Taipei.

Following the ICCAT-Japan Data and Management Improvement Project, which took place from 2009 to 2014, in December 2014, a special new project for capacity-building with a five-year duration began, financed by the Government of Japan, the ICCAT-Japan Capacity-Building Assistance Project (*JCAP*). Its overriding objective is to assist ICCAT developing CPCs in complying with their obligations related to data compilation and reporting, as well as in implementing efficiently ICCAT measures.

In July 2018, the Secretariat received a contribution of €17,280.00 from the People's Republic of China for the continuation of the activities of the Special Data Fund-People's Republic of China.

Following approval in 2014 of the *Recommendation by ICCAT on the Establishment of a Meeting Participation Fund for Developing ICCAT Contracting Parties (Rec. 14-14)*, the Secretariat, in addition to the 2018 allocation of €50,000.00 from the Commission's budget, received a voluntary contribution from Canada in the amount of €50,000.00 and another from the United States for €16,533.03.

In 2013, the Morocco Fund to Support National Capacity for Participation at Commission Meetings was established. For this purpose, in February 2018, Morocco made a voluntary contribution in the amount of €203,101.47.

In 2013, the Commission adopted the *Recommendation by ICCAT on the Establishment of a Scientific Capacity Building Fund for Developing States which are ICCAT Contracting Parties (Rec. 13-19)* for the purpose of supporting scientists from ICCAT Contracting Parties that are developing States in their need to acquire knowledge and develop skills on issues related to ICCAT. The special Scientific Capacity Building Fund (SCBF) was allocated €80,000.00 from the Working Capital Fund. In light of the limited activity of this fund, in 2017, the Commission decided to transfer the balance of this fund to the new Strategic Research Programme. It also decided that this fund should be maintained for future activities, but with no balance.

On 30 June 2015, the Secretariat signed the contract with the European Union for implementation of the Atlantic Ocean Tuna Tagging Programme (AOTTP). The contract has a five-year term, with the possibility of an 18-month extension for data analysis, and a budget of €15,000,000.00, of which the European Union will finance a maximum of €13,480,000.00 (90%). The remaining 10% must be financed by ICCAT or ICCAT CPCs. In 2018 voluntary contributions were received for the programme from the United States (€51,780.00), Chinese Taipei (€5,000.00), and the ICCAT Working Capital Fund (€462,544.32).

In March 2017, the Tunisia Fund to Support National Capacity for Participation at Commission Meetings was established. For this purpose, Tunisia sent in 2018 several contributions which total €40,277.09.

In 2015, the special Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance Fund (MCSF) was established to support and strengthen development and implementation of efficient in port inspection systems by developing CPCs for the purpose of achieving or surpassing the minimum standards established in the *Recommendation by ICCAT to support effective implementation of Recommendation 12-07 by ICCAT for an ICCAT scheme for minimum standards for inspection in port (Rec. 14-08)*. In 2018, a voluntary contribution was received from Norway in the amount of €15,115.48, another from the United States for €17,260.00 and a payment of €12,726.99 from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to finance the costs of the 2018 Meeting of the Port inspection Expert Group for Capacity Building and Assistance.

In April 2017, a contract was entered into with the European Union to develop a project between scientists from Ghana and from the IRD to finalise development of T3+ software necessary for comprehensive processing of Ghanaian statistics. The voluntary contribution received amounted to €24,710.00.

In 2017, the Commission decided to establish for 2018, the Strategic Research Programme, with the objective of grouping and including in the regular Commission budget all ICCAT scientific activities. It also decided to gradually incorporate this new budgetary item over 4 years. For this reason, a contract was entered into with the European Union in March 2018 to finance 80% of the Commission scientific activities in 2018, within the framework of the new Strategic Research Programme, which are not covered by the budget. The voluntary contribution received from the European Union was €449,400.00.

In April 2018, a 9-month contract was entered into with the European Union to finance the maintenance costs of the system and user support over this period, as well as the additional user support costs during the 2018 bluefin tuna campaign, and of the electronic bluefin tuna catch documentation system (eBCD). The voluntary contribution received amounted to €70,000.00.

In September 2018, a contract was signed with the European Union for a one-year term, to continue improving the capacity of developing countries, and which includes the activities of the *Recommendation by ICCAT to Support Effective Implementation of Recommendation 12-07 by ICCAT for an ICCAT Scheme for Minimum Standards for Inspection in Port* (Rec. 14-08), *Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Recommendation 11-26 on the Establishment of a Meeting Participation Fund for Developing ICCAT Contracting Parties* (Rec. 14-14) and a capacity-building course for scientists and managers on management strategy evaluation (MSE).

11.2 Audit of accounts

In 2017, the five-year period during which the firm Grant Thornton, S.L.P. was in charge of auditing ICCAT accounts ended. The Secretariat has enquired with ten auditing firms to select a new auditor for the next five years (2018-2022).

Of the ten firms consulted, three submitted an offer by the deadline which were reviewed and assessed. One was rejected as it did not comply with the deadlines established in the Financial Regulations for performing the audits. Taking into account the technical references and the financial proposals received, the firms were ranked as follows (detailed information is available at the Secretariat):

- 1st BDO
- 2nd Ernst & Young, S.L.

Selection of the auditing firm has been referred to the Commission for final decision.