

## COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

*(ICCAT Secretariat)*

### ***KOBE process***

In 2017 the ICCAT Secretariat has taken leadership of the Joint t-RFMO FAD Working Group, which held its first meeting in Madrid from 19 to 21 April 2017. No meeting of this working group was held in 2020, nor is scheduled for 2021.

A Joint t-RFMO meeting on bycatch, mainly focusing on sharks and involving all t-RFMOs, was organized by the ICCAT Secretariat in direct collaboration with the other t-RFMOs Secretariats. The meeting took place in Porto (Portugal), from 16 to 18 December 2019.

### ***Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora (CITES)***

In 2018 contacts were established with CITES, following the recommendation made by the SCRS Sharks Working Group for the ICCAT Secretariat to make an official request to CITES to facilitate the sampling of CITES listed species for the purposes of scientific research conducted under the auspices of ICCAT research programmes. The Secretariat agreed that it would contact with the CITES Secretariat to seek a solution. The Secretariat has been informed that the issue is being taken up by the CITES Standing Committee, which has a Working Group dealing with the simplified procedure for permits and certificates. The Eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties was held in Geneva (Switzerland), 17-28 August 2019. The Secretariat is aware that CITES has been working on some draft guidance on simplified procedures and scientific exchange to help Parties and concerned stakeholders take advantage of those approaches. The draft guidance will be made public in the next few weeks for comments.

### ***International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)***

In light of the fruitful experience in recent years between ICCAT and ICES regarding scientific collaboration, in 2018 the two organisations expressed their willingness to strengthen this cooperation and to explore new initiatives and discussions, which have commenced between the Secretariats. It has been agreed therefore that it is appropriate and desirable to improve collaboration between the ICCAT SCRS-ICES, particularly in the areas of bycatch, sharks and stock assessment issues, through our Sub-committee on Ecosystems and Bycatch, the Shark Species Group, as well as the WGSAM. Specifically, it would be desirable for ICES scientific experts to continue to participate in ICCAT shark stock assessments, as well as in the Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods. The ICES/ICCAT north-eastern porbeagle stock assessment was scheduled for 2020, however due to the impact of the pandemic on ICES activities, this joint assessment has been postponed possibly to 2022 (pending communication from ICES).

### ***The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)***

In 2016, ICCAT signed guidelines for cooperation with ACAP. This cooperation is a non-binding agreement that covers such issues as participation as observers in each other's meetings, as well as consultation, cooperation and collaboration on issues of common concern. In 2020 one scientist from ACAP attended the SCRS meeting of the Sub-committee on Ecosystems.

### ***General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)***

Following the contacts established in 2019 aiming to further strengthen the cooperation between the GFCM and ICCAT, the two Secretariats worked on a draft text of a Memorandum of Understanding, mainly relating to issues of common interest. That draft text was submitted to the 2019 Commission, which adopted it with amendments. This adopted text was provided to the GFCM, which later notified the Secretariat of some legal *language* issues. This feedback from the GFCM was circulated to ICCAT CPCs in 2020 and some CPCs expressed concerns with the changes in the language.

***Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission (WECAFC)***

In 2019, the two Secretariats worked on a draft text of a Memorandum of Understanding, mainly on issues of common interest. That draft text was submitted to the 2019 Commission, which adopted it with amendments. This adopted text was provided to the WECAFC which later notified the Secretariat of some legal language issues. This feedback regarding language changes from the WECAFC was circulated to ICCAT CPCs in 2020 and some CPCs had concerns with these new changes. Those CPCs wished the text to be re-tabled at the Commission and suggested that alternative avenues be explored in the event that a text cannot be agreed for a formal MoU.

***South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO)***

In 2019 a draft MoU was submitted for the consideration of the Commission. Based on the 2019 Commission's adoption of the text, in August 2020 a MoU was signed between the two Secretariats (see **Annex 1**).

***Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention (IAC)***

In 2019 the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention (IAC) informed the Secretariat that IAC Parties had adopted that year a Resolution (CIT-COP9-2019-R2) on the Conservation of Northwest Atlantic Leatherbacks, which includes a recommendation to the IAC Secretariat to resume dialogue with the ICCAT Secretariat and Parties, to establish a memorandum of understanding to improve our cooperation, and provide technical support to the Parties through implementation of the relevant resolutions of both organizations. IAC informed the Commission in Palma of this intention to have an MoU.

Following the contacts established in 2019, the two Secretariats have been working on a draft text for a Memorandum of Understanding, which should be presented to ICCAT CPCs for discussion at the Commission meeting in 2021.

***FAO Common Oceans/ABNJ Tuna Project***

At the 2017 ICCAT Commission meeting, it was decided to continue to cooperate with this programme provided that there are benefits to ICCAT. To this end, in 2020, the ICCAT Secretariat participated in the FAO Common Oceans/ABNJ Tuna Project and ABNJ Projects Steering Committees, 27-30 January 2020, Rome, Italy. In addition, the Secretariat had several meetings with the coordination team of the FAO Common Oceans/ABNJ Tuna Project, mainly related to the preparation of proposals for the new Phase 2 of the project.

The Secretariat has put forward 4 proposals:

- 1. Compliance-related Capacity Building**, to improve compliance with ICCAT conservation and management measures, in particular, but not limited to Port Inspection.

***Approach***

- Assess the needs of the applicants, and determine order of priorities (valid also for future compliance initiatives).
- A visit to each CP applicant (by expert/ consultant) is necessary to develop a more detailed programme tailored to each country.
- For port inspection, on the basis of the above, training materials can be adapted, using materials already available as a basis (IOTC/USA/FAO...). For other elements, experience of other RFMOs can be examined and adapted as appropriate.
- Implement the capacity programme for each CPC applicant, through training or other actions as determined.

Budget: \$US600,000

2. **IT related activities - Enhancement of Online Reporting (OR) systems**, to enhance the ICCAT Integrated Online Management System (IOMS), currently under development, through the development of extensions for automatic data interoperability with various projects from FAO, t-RFMOs and their Member States, and other potential stakeholders. It includes specialised support/training on the use of some IOMS modules (web applications) and the corresponding extensions.

**Approach**

Among others, a fundamental aspect of the ICCAT Integrated Online Management System (IOMS) development was the adoption of an open source design (licensing, copyright, and terms of use, to be decided in the future).

- All the t-RFMOs can, from the beginning, benefit (follow, learn, contribute, utilise) from:
  - The IOMS database design model (core component of the main web-app platform, which will manage all web application modules, user profiles, data requirements, etc.).
  - The IOMS standard components (message handler, data logger, data validators, versioning, etc.).
  - The work on harmonised data structures and coding systems.
  - Reduced learning curves on various development aspects.
  - Adopting code examples (promotion of code re-use).
  - the adoption of “open source” always promotes active development, higher participation, richer experiences, which often lead to more efficient and optimized results.
  - In the long-run (after implementing OR systems), if carefully planned, one of the great beneficiaries will be the tuna.org ([www.tuna-org.org](http://www.tuna-org.org)) as a final consumer (moving from a static to a dynamic web pages) of all the final “products” (information) available in each one of the five t-RFMOs OR systems.

Budget: \$US678,500

3. **Development of Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE)**, to support the work of the joint t-RFMO MSE Working Group and continue capacity building of scientists and managers.

**Approach**

- Funding a dedicated chair of the t-RFMO MSE WG. To have a chair which dedicates at least two months a year to coordinate and advance the work of this MSE WG.
- Create an MSE expertise panel that would serve as advisory panel to the t-RFMO MSE WG regarding development, technical evaluation, process of implementation, evaluation of process and general review of the different MSE programs under the t-RFMOs.
- Support the creation and maintenance of Github site dedicated to serve as repository of MSE Code and proper documentation associated from MSE processes from all t-RFMOs.
- Produce a review of approaches and procedures for the development and implementation of technical criteria to be used in the evaluation of MSE processes.
- Testing of alternative communication approaches for MSE results by applying such approaches to a global representative set of tuna stocks. This set should include both, model-based and empirical management procedures.
- Develop a process and provide the resources required for the independent review of MSE processes in t-RFMOs.
- Coordinate the development of a training program with modules for capacity building on MSE approach targeting specific users' groups, such managers, stake holders, and scientists.
- Create a reference library of documents, videos and support material in several languages for these activities

Budget: \$US825,000

4. **Generate ecosystem-based operating models for the testing of ecosystem indicators and management policies**, to validate indicators and management policies to advance the Ecosystem-Based-Approach to Fisheries Management (EBFM).

***Approach***

- We propose extensive desk-based simulation studies that establish a range of credible ecosystem hypotheses including fleet and bycatch behaviour in order to determine in which instances indicators and management policies might be considered reliable.
- In its simplest implementation, scenarios could consider, for example:
  - the hypothetical effects of the redistribution of a target stock on a bycatch-species bycatch effort (and corresponding efficacy of management procedure)
  - the hypothetical effects of changing in species targeting from one species to another on bycatch rate indicators and size-based indicators
- In its most complicated implementation, an Ecosystem-MSE linkage will be developed to distil essential ecosystem dynamics from complex model such as Ecopath for use in multispecies MSE. These models would further test indicators and management policies subject to complex inter-relationships between species.
- In both simple and complex implementations, more than 120 management policies already freely available in MSEtool and DLMtool can be tested for eco-readiness.

Budget: \$US400,000

The [Joint t-RFMO Bycatch Working Group meeting](#), which was held from 16-18 December 2019, was hosted by ICCAT with the financial support of the European Union, and a contribution of €40,000 was also received from the FAO Common Oceans/ABNJ program.

Finally, the FAO Commons Ocean/ABNJ Tuna project has agreed to support the update of the tuna.org webpage hosted by ICCAT, using funds available from the Phase 1 of the project. This task will be coordinated between the FAO Commons Ocean/ABNJ Tuna project team and the Secretariat.

***Tuna Compliance Network (TCN)***

No meeting of the Tuna Compliance Network could be held in 2020. However, a brief online meeting between the officers responsible for compliance and the network coordinator was held to consider future work, Some terms of reference for a consultancy study to examine the various compliance processes among the five tRFMOS and identify areas of commonality has been submitted to the ABNJ with view to try to complete this before the end of 2020.

In addition, the network has established a sub-group with other non-tuna RFMOs for exchanging information on IUU lists, with the aim trying, in the future, to identify the origin of changes incorporated into the various IUU lists.

***Coordinating Working Group on Fishery Statistics (CWP)***

No meetings were scheduled by FAO-CWP technical workshop on global harmonization of tuna fisheries statistics in 2020. However, the Secretariat has maintained close collaboration with FAO-CWP and FAO-FIRMS experts at the technical level on the solution of various data issues (data corrections, coding systems, application of CWP fisheries harmonization standards and concepts, data exchange, etc.). The ICCAT Secretariat also has activities under way for the accomplishment of the data provision for the FAO-FIRMS Global Tuna Atlas as described in the FAO FIRMS Steering Committee eleventh session report (FS11, May 2019 Rome-Italy: <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5247en/ca5247en.pdf>). These activities will continue until the public dissemination of the FAO Global Tuna Atlas, planned for October 2020.

***Fisheries and Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS)***

ICCAT is partner of the FAO/FIRMS that provides access to information on the global monitoring and management of fishery marine resources. As such the Secretariat provides regular updates for the stock status of ICCAT species (<http://firms.fao.org/firms/en>) assessed by the SCRS. In early 2020, the Secretariat updated the species identification sheets for white marlin and yellowfin tuna which were assessed by the SCRS in 2019.

***Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA)***

The Secretariat has prepared a few new entries for the Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA-ProQuest) database of the papers published in the most recent issues of the ICCAT Collective Volume of Scientific Papers.