

DRAFT LETTER OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN ICCAT AND GFCM*(submitted by the Secretariat)*

This letter expresses the intention of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) to work cooperatively with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) under the umbrella of the Agreement Between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

Consistent with that agreement, ICCAT intends to exchange information and documents with GFCM and cooperate in areas of mutual interest to the respective organizations, including data collection, research, and the provision of technical assistance. In particular, ICCAT and GFCM intend to enhance cooperation to advance our common goals with regard to the sustainable use of living marine resources and the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, within our respective mandates, governing rules, and conservation and management measures.

As voluntary participants in this work, ICCAT and GFCM intend to strengthen collaboration and coordinate efforts, improve synergies, and avoid duplications in the context of the development of projects and programs focusing on regional priorities in order to foster improved governance and promote commonalities.

Specific activities of mutual interest on which ICCAT and GFCM intend to work collaboratively may include, but are not limited to:

1. Revitalization of the joint ICCAT/GFCM Working Group on Stocks of Large Pelagic Fishes in the Mediterranean Sea to foster exchange of relevant information and data collection, including on the interactions between tuna and swordfish and other species which may be of relevance to both organizations;
2. Exchange of relevant information on IUU fishing activities carried out in their respective Convention areas;
3. Enhanced communication at the level of the respective scientific and technical bodies, including the compliance committees;
4. Mutual participation in research and capacity building projects;
5. Exchanging views on the role RFMOs might play in relevant regional fisheries management organizations (e.g., BBNJ, etc.) and, as appropriate, coordinating with respect to their engagement in these fora.

ICCAT and GFCM hope that through this cooperation they can harmonize activities and optimize the use of resources to the extent possible.