



CCSBT-CC/1010/08 (Rev1)

## **Progress Report on 2020 Compliance Committee WorkPlan Items**

### **1. Introduction**

This paper provides the Secretariat's report back on some elements of the Compliance Committee's (CC's) 2020 Workplan which were allocated to the Secretariat, or which were allocated to Members and the Members concerned have already provided information. More substantive 2020 WorkPlan items are reported in separate agenda items and papers.

The elements reported on in this paper are:

- A response to the Workplan item that requested the Secretariat follow up with the IOTC transshipment observer regarding the circumstances which led to suspected SBT being reported on board a Chinese-flagged Carrier Vessel/ transhipped from various Chinese fishing vessels;
- Results from the request for the Secretariat to check ICCAT records for any newly reported SBT catch;
- Responses from Members (where available) regarding the Workplan request to investigate apparent discrepancies between COMTRADE data and exports/ imports reported to the CCSBT (through the CDS); and
- An update on the operationalisation of the transshipment Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with the WCPFC.

### **2. Follow-up with IOTC Transshipment Observer Programme**

CC14 requested that the Secretariat, "*Follow up with observer via IOTC, regarding the circumstances which led to suspected SBT on Chinese vessel*". Extensive information on the circumstances surrounding this event were provided previously in paper CCSBT-CC/1810/20 (Rev1).

The Secretariat has checked on this item as requested and advises that the observer alleged SBT was on board the Chinese vessel based on visual identification methods and provided photographs of fish either 'positively identified' as SBT and/or fish that were potentially SBT for each vessel concerned.

### **3. Feedback on Trade Data Discrepancies Reported in Paper CC/1910/10**

The Fourteenth Meeting of the Compliance Committee's (CC14's) WorkPlan specified that various Members (Australia, the EU, Indonesia and South Africa) that had apparent discrepancies between COMTRADE data and exports/ imports reported to the CCSBT (refer to page four of the Secretariat's paper CC/1910/10) should investigate those discrepancies before CC15.

More specifically the items these Members were requested to investigate were:

- **Australia:**  
“Australia’s total SBT exports for 2018 are recorded as 14,138.9t (for fresh/chilled and frozen SBT combined) in COMTRADE, which is quite a lot higher than reported in the CDS (9,371.8t) for 2018”.
- **EU:**  
**Exports** – “For 2016 to 2018, the COMTRADE statistics record that small quantities of SBT were traded by EU Members, with a large export figure (376.5t<sup>1</sup>) recorded for 2016. These figures seem to indicate that species miscoding by EU Member States is continuing to occur.”  
**Imports** – “For 2016 to 2018, COMTRADE statistics record that quantities of SBT were traded by EU Members, again appearing to indicate that species miscoding by EU Member States is continuing to occur.”
- **Indonesia:**  
“Indonesia’s SBT exports are well under-represented in all 3 years of the COMTRADE export statistics – COMTRADE records only 11t, 16t and 0.3t of total exports (fresh and frozen SBT combined) for 2016, 2017, and 2018 respectively.”
- **South Africa;**  
“South Africa’s exports are also well under-represented on the COMTRADE database – COMTRADE records only 2.5t, 31.8t and 42.6t of total exports (fresh and frozen SBT combined) for 2016, 2017, and 2018 respectively.”

On 21/07/20, the Secretariat sent reminders to the EU, Indonesia and South Africa that the above items needed to be investigated by CC15. Two Members were sent further reminders.

### **Outcomes of Member Investigations**

#### **a) Australia**

On 17/07/20, the Secretariat circulated (Circular #2020/065) a letter from Australia (**Attachment A**) confirming that, “Australia has investigated this irregularity and can confirm that this arose from the miscoding of other fish species exported from Australia during this period.”

The Secretariat notes that SBT COMTRADE export statistics for Australia for 2018 have been updated and are now recorded as 987.67t (previously 5,472.8t) of fresh/chilled SBT and 8,134.14t (previously 8,666.1t) of frozen SBT, *i.e.* 9,121.81t total Australian exports in 2018, which is now a little lower than the 2018 export total derived from the CDS data for 2018 (9,371.8t – refer to paper CCSBT-CC/1910/04: Attachment C, Tables (C)i) and ii).

#### **b) EU**

The majority of EU SBT exports and imports of SBT previously recorded on COMTRADE for the EU between 2016 to 2018 (and reported in paper CC/1910/10) are no longer recorded in COMTRADE. Only the following SBT exports remain recorded for 2016 to 2018:

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<sup>1</sup> 375.1t of the 376.5t recorded for the Netherlands

Year	Trade Flow	Exporter	Importer	Commodity Code	Commodity	Netweight (kg)	Trade Value (US\$)
2018	Export	France	Switzerland	30236	Fish; fresh or chilled, southern bluefin tunas (Thunnus maccoyii), excluding fillets, fish meat of 0304, and edible fish offal of subheadings 0302.91 to 0302.99	No net weight recorded	30965
2016	Export	France	Singapore	30236	Fish; fresh or chilled, southern bluefin tunas (Thunnus maccoyii), excluding fillets, livers, roes, and other fish meat of heading 0304	13	820
2016	Export	France	Switzerland	30236	Fish; fresh or chilled, southern bluefin tunas (Thunnus maccoyii), excluding fillets, livers, roes, and other fish meat of heading 0304	89	1334

The EU undertook to contact French Customs to investigate the above updated export statistics above.

In response to this WorkPlan item the EU advised that:

*“As we have concluded in investigations undertaken in the last few years, these exports are only explained by some miscoding of Bluefin Tuna exports. Atlantic Bluefin Tuna is abundant in the EU, where it is mainly caught in the very south of Europe (Mediterranean sea) and it is confounded with SBT, by its aspect and/or by its commercial name/designation. The EU has no catches of SBT and imports are very rare and identified by EU Member State customs and/or by exporters through the CDS, and therefore it is not possible that SBT is exported from the EU as indicated by COMTRADE. As we have indicated last year, TRADEATLAS and now COMTRADE are using unofficial trade sources that could include some errors. You should only use data provided by DG MARE that is based on constant exchanges with the EU Members States customs, otherwise we risk to have recurrently the same mistakes and the same questions.”*

**c) Indonesia**

The Secretariat checked and can confirm that the Indonesia’s COMTRADE export figures for 2016-2018 remain the same as were reported to CC14. Indonesia has not yet provided any update on the results of its investigations.

**d) South Africa**

The Secretariat checked and can confirm that the South Africa’s COMTRADE export figures for 2016-2018 remain the same as were reported to CC14. South Africa has not yet provided any update on the results of its investigations.

**USA**

As well as Members’ investigations, the USA also provided a comment on COMTRADE database information reported in the Secretariat’s paper CCSBT–CC/1910/10. The relevant COMTRADE information reported in 2019 was that:

*“The USA is recorded as having large exports of fresh/chilled SBT - 127.5t, 97.9t and 141.6t for 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively. Due to the product being recorded as fresh SBT, this seems likely to be due to miscoding.”*

The USA advised the Secretariat that:

*“As the United States has reported previously, NOAA has found significant limitations and inaccuracies in the data .... We suspect this is the case here as well. We do not have any indications of trade in fresh SBT outside of what we have reported through our CDS data, and the level of fresh SBT exports indicated in the .... database is extremely unlikely.”*

#### **4. Check of ICCAT Records for and Newly Reported SBT Catch**

The Secretariat re-checked ICCAT's website<sup>2</sup> and confirmed that no further catches of SBT by CCSBT Non-Cooperating Non-Members (NCNMs) have been reported to ICCAT since 2016 (17t by Namibia) and 2017 (1t by Brazil).

#### **5. Transshipment Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with the WCPFC**

CC13 noted there was only one CCSBT Member that was interested in transshipping SBT in the High Seas of the WCPFC Convention Area under the provisions of the transshipment MoC with the WCPFC. Further, CC13 recommended that, with respect to operationalising this MoC, Option 1<sup>3</sup> be pursued by the Secretariat.

Option 1 was described as:

*“That the Secretariat continue to work with the WCPFC, Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and South Pacific Community (SPC) to try to ensure that CCSBT's requirements are incorporated into the Pacific Island minimum transshipment observer standards that the FFA and SPC will commence developing in the near future.”*

In addition, CC13 agreed that, *“Members could simultaneously pursue option 2 or 3 bilaterally”*. To the Secretariat's knowledge, no CCSBT Member has to date pursued a bilateral agreement to operationalise this MoC.

#### **Secretariat Report Back Regarding Progress on “Option 1” of the MoC**

In August 2018, in order to try to progress ‘Option 1’, *i.e.* the incorporation of CCSBT's transshipment data requirements into the Pacific Island minimum transshipment observer standards, the Compliance Manager attended the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Tuna Fishery Data Collection Committee (DCC) in Brisbane. Since then no further DCC meetings have been held. Therefore, there has been little opportunity to provide further input towards the development of Pacific Island minimum transshipment observer standards that may facilitate WCPFC ROP observers to be endorsed as CCSBT transshipment observers.

The Secretariat had a few short exchanges with a fishery consultant from the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)/ Pacific Community (SPC) project on at-sea transshipment data collection in June 2019, and re-provided a slightly updated version of the CCSBT's transshipment observer data requirements to the consultant at that time.

The consultant has since completed a trip/project aboard a Carrier Vessel and completed a report (in Jan 2020) titled: *“Standardised Monitoring Procedures for Longline Transshipments in the WCPFC”*.

The aims of the consultant's project are described in the report as to:

- design a monitoring program for Pacific Island Regional Fisheries Observers (PIRFO) deployed on longline carrier vessels to monitor transshipments;
- propose the data collection standards;
- trial the monitoring program at sea;
- map the proposed standards to those of neighbouring Regional Fishery Management Organisation (RFMO) transshipment observer programmes;
- provide the associated e-standards; and
- make suggestions for the implementation of the standards over a trial period.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.iccat.int/en/t1.asp>

<sup>3</sup> Three options were put forward for consideration

The report does not specifically mention the Transshipment MoC between the CCSBT and WCPFC, nor discuss any proposed detailed standards.

However, it does include a general recommendation to:

*“Start discussions with neighbouring RMFOs to fully describe and document the similarities and differences in the sampling programmes to achieve harmonisation across RFMOs in data collection and perhaps training certification.”*

The Secretariat understands that the next meeting of the DCC, where this matter might be further progressed, is currently planned to be held as either a small virtual meeting in late 2020, or possibly as an in-person meeting during 2021.

## **6. Recommendations**

It is recommended that CC15:

- Note the report back on 2020 Workplan items presented in this paper.

**Prepared by the Secretariat**



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Agriculture,  
Water and the Environment**

Attachment A

Ref: 19/016902E

Mr Robert Kennedy  
Executive Secretary  
Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna  
PO Box 37  
DEAKIN WEST ACT 2600

Dear Mr Kennedy

At last year's Compliance Committee, (CC14) Australia undertook to investigate why the southern bluefin tuna (SBT) export figure recorded on COMTRADE (14,138.9t) for 2018 was higher than exports recorded in the Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) for 2018 (9,371.8t), and report back to the Commission. The COMTRADE information was contained in the Secretariat's paper CC/1910/10.

Australia has investigated this irregularity and can confirm that this arose from the miscoding of other fish species exported from Australia during this period.

I confirm that Australia's SBT exports were in accordance with the information provided through the CDS.

I would be grateful if you could share this information with CCSBT Commissioners and Heads of Delegation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mel Brown', written in a cursive style.

Mel Brown  
A/g First Assistant Secretary  
Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries, Forestry and Engagement Division

10 July 2020