



CCSBT-EC/2010/04 (Rev.1)

Report from the Secretariat

Overview

This report provides a summary of the main activities of the Secretariat since the Twenty Sixth Annual Meeting of the CCSBT in October 2019.

This report also contains one specific matter for consideration by the Extended Commission (EC), which is:

- Whether to renew the appointment of the Chair of the SC/ESC for another term.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the operation of the Secretariat during 2020, but despite this, with the exception of travel for meetings, the Secretariat has been able to conduct most of its work as normal.

All staff have been working from home since late March 2020 and, with the exception of during meetings¹, this will continue until after the annual meetings in October as a minimum. Fortunately, the Secretariat's ICT² infrastructure and internal processes facilitates remote work by all staff with very little inconvenience.

Organisation of meetings during 2020 has involved substantial additional work from the Secretariat, because all meeting arrangements had to be made for both physical meetings and virtual meetings. Furthermore, contingency arrangements had to be established to obtain the most from the virtual environment and considerable effort was spent investigating and testing the suitability of different online platforms for the CCSBT meetings.

The cancellation of all of CCSBT's physical meetings during 2020 has resulted in substantial reductions in expenditure this year.

¹ If COVID-19 related conditions allow, the Secretariat will conduct the annual meetings of the Extended Scientific Committee, Compliance Committee and Extended Commission from the Secretariat's office.

² Information and Communication Technologies.

Officials of the CCSBT

The following official positions in the CCSBT were nominated, appointed or held during 2020.

Officer	Name	Date nominated / appointed
Chair – Commission & Extended Commission	Mr Ichiro Nomura	29 June 2020
Vice Chair – Commission & Extended Commission	Ms Melissa Brown	15 June 2020
Chair – Finance & Administration Committee (FAC)	Mr Dominic Vallières	1 September 2020
Chair – Compliance Committee	Mr Frank Meere	16 October 2015 ^{*1}
Chair – SC/ESC	Dr Kevin Stokes	1 November 2017 ^{*2}
Chair – ERSWG	Mr Alexander Morison	22 February 2011 ^{*3}

^{*1} The CC Chair is appointed for a three-year term with the possibility of up to two reappointments. The CC Chair's second term expires at the end of CCSBT 28 during October 2021.

^{*2} The SC/ESC Chair is appointed for a three-year term with the possibility of up to two reappointments. The SC/ESC Chair's first term expires on 1 November 2020.

^{*3} The Chair of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG) is appointed for a term of at least two ERSWG meetings with the possibility of up to two reappointments. The ERSWG Chair has one more ERSWG meeting remaining on his current term, which is also his last term.

The first term of the SC/ESC Chair's appointment expires on 1 November 2020. The Extended Commission will need to decide whether to renew the appointment of the current SC/ESC Chair for a second three-year term. The SC/ESC Chair may serve for a total of three three-year terms.

Consultants to the CCSBT

The Secretariat engaged four consultants to assist the CCSBT in selected scientific meetings during 2020. These comprised:

- The CCSBT's independent Scientific Advisory Panel, consisting of Drs Ana Parma, Jim Ianelli and Sean Cox.
- A technical coding consultant (Dr D'Arcy Webber) in relation to the CCSBT's Operating Model and Management Procedure.

Secretariat Staff and Office Management

The Secretariat's staff comprised 5 full-time positions and 2 casual, part-time positions during 2020. These were:

- Executive Secretary;
- Deputy Executive Secretary;
- Database Manager;
- Compliance Manager;
- Office Administrator (1 full-time position, but shared by two people working part-time);
- Data Entry Officer (casual, part-time); and
- Compliance Assistant (casual, part-time).

There have been no changes in the Secretariat's staff since CCSBT 26. However, one of the part-time Office Administrators is taking maternity leave and leave without pay for all of 2020. The gap is being managed through additional hours from the other part-time Office Administrator and casual assistance from a previous Office Administrator.

The Executive Secretary's contract has been renewed for another three-year term until 30 October 2023 in accordance with the decision of CCSBT 26. The Deputy Executive Secretary's contract has been renewed for another three-year term commencing on 3 June 2020.

Financial

The preparation of CCSBT's Financial Statements for 2019 was conducted according to schedule. The Financial Statements were reviewed by the CCSBT's new auditor, RSM Australia Pty Ltd³ and distributed to Members in Circular #2020/026. The outcomes of RSM's review identified no items of concern.

As advised in CCSBT Circular #2019/062, a range of exemptions for Australia's GST has been restored for the CCSBT and the CCSBT was able to claim those exemptions back to 19 June 2017. The Secretariat has claimed these exemptions and the full amount of this claim to the end of 2019 (\$250,787.50) has been paid by the Australian Taxation Office to the Secretariat.

A draft revised budget for 2020 and a draft budget for 2021, including indicative budgets for 2022 and 2023 will be provided for the EC's consideration in meeting documents CCSBT-EC/2010/05 and CCSBT-EC/2010/06.

Organisation of CCSBT Meetings

The Secretariat has organised, or is in the process of organising, the following formal CCSBT meetings since CCSBT 26:

Eleventh Operating Model and Management Procedure Technical meeting	15-19, 22 & 24 June ⁴ 2020
Twenty Fifth Meeting of the Scientific Committee, incorporating the Extended Scientific Committee	31 August - 6 September 2020
Fifteenth Meeting of the Compliance Committee	8-10 October 2020
Twenty Seventh Annual Meeting of the Commission, incorporating the Extended Commission	12-15 October 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, contingency arrangements were developed and activated for the above meetings, and all Meetings were (or will be) conducted in a virtual environment.

The Secretariat also organised three CPUE web meetings (18 March 2020, 13 May 2020 and 28 May 2020) and fourth web meeting in relation to unaccounted mortality and CPUE (9 June).

³ Members agreed to appoint RSM as the new auditor for the CCSBT's financial statements during June 2019 (see CCSBT Circular #2019/037).

⁴ 22 June was a pre-agreed contingency day that became necessary to use. The meeting agreed to also meet on 24 June for report adoption and closing of the meeting.

Translation of the 2019 meeting reports into Japanese has been completed and the translated reports have been placed onto the CCSBT web site. In accordance with a decision at CCSBT 26, bound versions of the reports are no longer being produced.

Organisation of meeting venues for 2021 is underway, with quotes obtained and venues selected. As at the time of writing this report, the venues were available for the tentative meeting dates that were agreed intersessionally and notified to Members in Circular #2020/030:

Meeting	City	Tentative meeting date
SC/ESC 26	Brisbane, Australia	Mon. 30 Aug. – Sat. 4 Sep. 2021
CC 16	Freemantle, Australia	Thu. 7 – Sat. 9 Oct. 2021
CCSBT 28		Mon. 11 – Thu. 14 Oct. 2021

However, until an effective COVID-19 vaccine becomes widely available, it will remain uncertain as to whether these meetings can proceed as physical meetings.

As announced in CCSBT Circular #2020/047, it was agreed intersessionally that the next CCSBT ERSWG⁵ meeting would be deferred until early 2022.

Attendance at meetings with other organisations since CCSBT 26

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, at the time this paper was prepared, Secretariat staff have not attending any physical meetings of other organisations during 2020. However, the Compliance Manager has attended several on-line meetings including giving a CDS presentation to the IOTC's CDS Working Group (10 – 11 February 2020), a quarterly meeting of the Tuna Compliance Network (TCN) and an INTERPOL discussion on the use of financial and associated data to fight fisheries crime (both in June 2020).

Proposed Attendance at meetings with other organisations between CCSBT 27 and CCSBT 28

It is proposed that the Compliance Manager attend:

- The fourth meeting of the Tuna Compliance Network and the Seventh Global Fisheries Enforcement Training workshop (possibly being held during June 2021 in Canada); and
- An online meeting of the FFA Data Collection Committee that may be held in late 2020 and/or a physical meeting that might be held during 2021 depending on travel restrictions (the most likely location is New Caledonia).

Apart from the above and COFI⁶ 34, which has been rescheduled to be held on 1-5 February 2021, the Secretariat is not aware of other meetings that it should attend during 2021. The Secretariat will consider attending COFI and other relevant meetings that arise depending on COVID-19 related travel restrictions, time and budget. At present, due to travel restrictions, it seems unlikely that the Secretariat will attend COFI in February 2021.

⁵ Ecologically Related Species Working Group.

⁶ The FAO Committee on Fisheries.

Outsourced Projects

The Secretariat has contracted the following projects for the CCSBT to be conducted during 2020:

- Long term Gene tagging (with CSIRO);
- Close-kin sampling, DNA extraction and sequencing (with CSIRO);
- Close-kin identification and exchange (with CSIRO); and
- Sampling and ageing of Indonesian SBT Otoliths (with CSIRO).

CCSBT Circulars

Circulars are used to issue requests and to distribute information to Members. A summary list of circulars is maintained on the private area of the CCSBT web site for easy reference by Members. The summary list contains the circular number, date, subject(s), whether a response is required, the due date for a response and the outcome (or a reference to the location of the outcome). The list of circulars gives an indication of the add-hoc and “once-off” intersessional activities of the Secretariat and EC. Eighty Five Circulars were issued between CCSBT 26 and 26 August 2020.

CCSBT Web site

The web site continues to be an actively updated and actively used information tool for both CCSBT members and the general public. The public side of the CCSBT website was updated immediately after CCSBT 26 to incorporate the results and decisions from the 2019 meetings of the CCSBT.

Participation in the Fisheries Resource Monitoring System (FIRMS)

The CCSBT is a partner in FAO’s FIRMS system. During 2019/20, the Secretariat met the CCSBT’s obligations to FIRMS by:

- Updating the CCSBT fact sheet for southern bluefin tuna by incorporating the ESC’s latest stock status report together with relevant decisions from CCSBT 26; and
- Supplying agreed data to FIRMS.

Integrated MCS Measures

Managing and implementing the CCSBT MCS measures continues to be a significant component of the Secretariat’s work. Since CCSBT 26, this has included:-

- For the CDS:
 - Running CDS data reconciliations, and following up on errors and missing information and forms;
 - Maintenance of the CDS database and commencing development of a trial electronic CDS (eCDS);

- Processing CDS validation details and developing and testing an authorised validator on-line submission and update interface⁷;
- Producing 6 monthly and annual CDS reports; and
- Coordinating the purchase of centralised tags for use with the CDS.
- Conducting a Phase 1 Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of the European Union.
- Managing the CCSBT records of Authorised Fishing Vessels, Carrier Vessels and Farms.
- Managing the operation of the CCSBT transshipment resolution.
- Managing the operation of the Resolution for Minimum Standards for Inspection in Port.
- Managing initial quota allocations and final catch by vessel/company data and associated access permissions.
- Checking for any submissions in relation to the CCSBT IUU Vessel List Resolution⁸ and implementing the new cross-listing provisions of the Resolution.
- Coordinating an intersessional correspondence group to develop a new Compliance Action Plan.
- Preparing a revised draft annual reporting template and Compliance Policies/Resolutions.
- Producing papers and reports for the Compliance Committee.
- Maintaining compliance relationships with relevant bodies and organisations.

CCSBT Catch Reporting (excluding scientific data exchange)

Monthly Catch Reports

The Secretariat has continued to compile these statistics and has loaded them to the private area of the CCSBT web site on a monthly basis, providing email notification to members when updates occur. An online submission and update interface has been developed and tested so that Members can manage their own monthly catch report data in future⁷.

Reporting of Initial Quota Allocations and Final Catches by Vessel/Company

The Secretariat has provided reminders to each Member for submitting this information. On receiving the information, the Secretariat has loaded this information to a special section of the private area of the CCSBT web site. This information is only available to those who have agreed to share it and have applied for and been granted access to this information in accordance with the Rules and Procedures for the Protection, Access to, and Dissemination of Data compiled by the CCSBT.

⁷ CCSBT Members have recently been given access to the online interface for testing purposes.

⁸ Resolution on Establishing a List of Vessels Presumed to have Carried Out Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Activities For Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT).

CCSBT Surface Tagging Program

Tag deployment ceased after the 2006/07 season and the Secretariat's involvement in this program now relates only to tag recovery activity. Between 8 and 71 tagged SBT per year were recaptured each year from 2013 to 2019. The number reported recaptured so far during 2020 was 6 SBT as at 24 August 2020. The number of recaptured tags is expected to decline each year.

Database Developments and Data Exchange

The CCSBT Data CD and associated documentation was updated and made available to Members for downloading on 24 January 2020. An interim update of the Data CD containing information from the 2020 Data Exchange was also placed on the private area of the CCSBT website on 2 June 2020.

The Secretariat managed the 2020 scientific data exchange, which involved active exchange of data between Members and the Secretariat mainly between April and mid-June. The Secretariat conducted substantial post-processing of the data to produce derived datasets that were required as part of the data exchange.

The Seventh annual ERSWG Data Exchange occurred during 2020. With the exception of South Africa⁹, all Members have submitted ERS data required for this data exchange. The European Union had no SBT catch and therefore had no relevant data to submit for the ERSWG Data Exchange which is defined as being for "shots/sets where SBT was either targeted or caught".

At the time of finalising this report, the database was up to date for all data received.

In conjunction with Shore Informatics, the Secretariat has continued upgrading its database and has developed a "Monthly Catch Reports" module and an "Authorised Validator" module that will allow Members to provide this information directly through an on-line interface⁷. Work has also commenced on a module to allow Members to provide information on Authorised Vessels directly through the on-line interface.

Significant work has also been conducted with Shore Informatics on the development of a trial eCDS for the CCSBT. A report on progress with development of the eCDS will be provided to the October 2020 meeting of the Compliance Committee.

The eCDS and the other on-line interfaces being developed will be hosted in the cloud on a secure Microsoft Azure SQL database. The Secretariat is planning to take advantage of the experience it has gained with Microsoft Azure to move its internal SQL Server databases to the same environment. This will provide a more robust and secure environment than the Secretariat's internal database server, and it is also expected to reduce both capital and maintenance costs in the long term.

⁹ Which advised that the recent loss of key personnel responsible for collection and synthesis of scientific data, coupled with the strict lockdowns for the COVID-19 pandemic, made it difficult to remain up-to-date with processing of data from the fishery.

Consolidated List of Authorised Vessels (CLAV)

The main purpose of the tuna RFMOs Consolidated List of Authorised Vessels, or CLAV is to make the information about authorised vessels available to help fight and deter IUU activities. The CLAV consolidates authorised vessel information from the five tuna RFMOs and reduces the human burden in determining which vessels are authorised to fish in which areas. Furthermore, the process of consolidating the tuna RFMOs' authorised vessel lists enables discrepancies between the lists to be identified and enables these discrepancies to be investigated and for errors to be corrected, which improves the data quality.

The CLAV is available at <http://clav.iotc.org/browser>. A web page has also been established in the Authorised Vessel and Farms section of the CCSBT web site to provide easy access to the CLAV.

From mid-2014 to October 2019, the FAO, with the support of the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project, provided the expertise and technical assistance for maintaining and updating the CLAV in close-to-real time. Updates are conducted by automated daily communications between each t-RFMO and the CLAV. The main cost in maintaining the CLAV relates to resolving errors, discrepancies and duplicates of vessel data in the CLAV.

No maintenance of the CLAV has been conducted since funding ceased in October 2019. As of 8 April 2020, about 200 potential duplicate records were detected in the CLAV and a similar number of error messages were occurring during automatic uploads. Furthermore, “page not found” errors are being generated for all CCSBT vessel records when attempting to find the CCSBT source information for these vessels, and vessel types are not being updated to match associated changes on the CCSBT's record of authorised vessels.

It is expected that the quality of the data in the CLAV and the usability of the CLAV interface will continue to degrade in the absence of ongoing maintenance. The CCSBT Secretariat will continue to maintain the quality of its own data in the absence of central checking and will cooperate in any discussions between the tuna RFMOs and FAO to find an effective solution for ongoing maintenance.