Resolutions on Research Activities

1. Development of a SBT Scientific Research Program including a scientific fishing component by the CCSBT external scientists *(adopted at the Special Meeting – 16-18 November 2000)*

2. Research Mortality Allowance (RMA) within the framework of CCSBT *(adopted at the Special Meeting – 16-18 November 2000)*

DEVELOPMENT OF A SBT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PROGRAM INCLUDING A SCIENTIFIC FISHING COMPONENT BY THE CCSBT EXTERNAL SCIENTISTS

Introduction

Commission Members have agreed to engage the External Scientific Advisory Panel to design an SBT Scientific Research Program (SRP). The SRP will complement the recent initiatives introduced in CCSBT for improving stock assessments and developing a management strategy/procedure by providing improved data and information inputs for conducting all future stock assessments. In the first instance the SRP will run for a period of two years (2001-2002) after which the effectiveness of the program will be considered in light of future research requirements.

Results of the SRP are expected to improve the Commission's ability to set future TACs in order to achieve the objectives of the Commission as outlined in the Convention, which are the conservation and optimum utilisation of SBT, and meet the currently agreed management objective of recovery of the parental biomass to 1980 levels by 2020. The overall objective of the SRP, including any scientific fishing component (SFC), is to provide statistically significant data for reducing the levels of uncertainty in stock assessments made by the Commission and to identify directions for further research.

The SRP can include a catch component of up to 1,500 tonnes in each year. The per annum tonnage used for the SRP would be catch in addition to national catch and will be managed by the Commission. The three Member countries should consider and devise an equitable means of resourcing/funding the research activities in a timely fashion.

In designing the SRP consideration should be given to where potential improvements can be made in the three basic input components to the stock assessment:

1. The basic fishery data (e.g. size and age distribution);
2. SBT biological parameters (e.g. natural mortality, age of maturity, growth rates, length/weight relationships, stock structure and spatial dynamics); and
3. Absolute and/or relative measures of abundance (e.g. CPUE, fishery independent surveys, tagging experiments).

The proposal is for a SRP to be developed by the external scientists following consultation with national scientists, managers and industries. The participating external scientists are asked to attend a meeting with the Commission's national scientists in November 2000 to discuss the SRP and receive input in relation to the design, content and potential objectives of the overall Program,

as well as the scientific components of the Program. The external scientists should develop a cooperative working arrangement and, if appropriate, are encouraged to convene a separate meeting, at their convenience, in either December 2000 or January 2001 before submitting in mid February 2001 a draft proposal to the Secretariat for dissemination among Parties and for discussion at the Scientific Committee. The external scientists can seek input from other scientists, including national scientists and other external scientists, in developing the SRP. The Secretariat will distribute any comments provided to the external scientists from other sources among the Parties. External scientists, if they desire, can submit additional information individually.

Terms of Reference

The report on the proposed SRP should address to the extent considered appropriate, but is not limited to, the following:

- Identification, and basis for selection, of key uncertainties in the Commission stock assessment to be addressed by the SRP
- Identification and evaluation of individual research sub-programs and the uncertainties they address
- Reporting requirements for each component of the SRP
- Procedures for revision based on results obtained in the first year
- Criteria and a process for evaluation of the SRP at the end of two years

Individual research projects within the SRP should address, to the extent considered appropriate, aspects such as, but not be limited to, the following:

- Research/experimental design
- The data to be collected including sample size requirements
- The proposed methods for analysing the data including, where pertinent, expected levels of precision (i.e. CVs)
- How the results would be incorporated into the stock assessment and their likely contribution to that process
- Resource and implementation requirements (including areas, time period, data collection procedures and vessel deployment requirements, etc.)
- Estimated tonnage and number of fish required, where applicable (e.g. capture and/or tagging)
- Verification procedures including level of observer coverage
- Personnel required to implement field and data collection components
- Process for analysing and review of the results (e.g. workshop)

External scientists, national scientists, managers and industry will meet at the end of each year/season to review progress and provide a report to the Commission recommending the implementation of any changes deemed necessary.

Reporting

The external scientists are to submit a draft version of their report to the CCSBT Secretariat by mid February 2001 for immediate dissemination among Parties and for discussion at the Scientific Committee (SC), which will be held in March 2001.

The external scientists in their report to the SC will make every effort to present to the SC a report agreed by consensus.

Decision Procedure

When the external scientists' report is discussed at the SC the following decision procedure regarding the report to be submitted to the Commission will apply:

(a) If the external scientists present a consensus report to the SC or a report adopted by a majority of 4 to 1:

(i) The members of the SC and the external scientists shall seek to reach consensus on the report or its modification after discussion so that the report can be passed to the Commission as a report of the SC.

(ii) If consensus is not reached among the SC members and the external scientists, then the consensus report or majority report of the external scientists, as the case may be, will be passed to the Commission as a report of the SC with dissenting opinions attached.

(b) If the external scientists present a report that cannot be dealt with under (a):

(i) The members of the SC and the external scientists shall seek to reach consensus on a report to be passed to the Commission as a report of the SC.

(ii) If consensus cannot be achieved at the meeting of the SC, then the Scientific Committee of the IATTC or ICCAT will be asked to examine and decide on the final content of the SRP report, in accordance with the terms of reference given to the external scientists. Nationals of a CCSBT Party who are members of the Scientific Committee carrying out the work on the SRP shall not participate in that work. The report of the relevant Scientific Committee will then be presented to the Commission as the report of the SC.

The report of the SC, presented in accordance with the procedure above, will be discussed at the Commission for the final decision on the SRP. If the Commission cannot reach a consensus, the report presented by the SC will become the decision of the Commission.

Research Mortality Allowance (RMA) within the Framework of CCSBT

It is essential for Contracting Parties to gather sufficient scientific information in order to improve knowledge on the biology, stock situation and ecology of southern bluefin tuna (SBT) for conservation and optimum utilization thereof. To facilitate gathering such information, it is appropriate to establish an "Research Mortality Allowance (RMA)".

Criteria which designate scientific research activities which can utilize RMA will be as follows:

1. Research activities which do not include "commercial type operations," such as:
   (1) Larvae and juvenile sampling with scientific research vessels (e.g. Shoyo-maru)
   (2) Fish taken for experiments such as TS measurement in a cage or pinger tracking

2. Incidental death during research activities whose objectives are not to catch SBT, such as:
   (1) Tagging research (fish which die during dedicated tagging activity)
   (2) Fish taken for confirmation of species during operation of acoustic survey.

3. Research feasibility studies on a limited experimental scale.
   The study to assist formulation of planning of a full scale program.

The total level of RMA shall not exceed 10 tonnes each year and will comprise part of the agreed CCSBT Scientific Research Program.

Contracting Parties, which intend to use the RMA will provide a proposal of their objectives and expected level of research mortality through the Commission to all Contracting Parties for consideration prior to undertaking the research activities. The Contracting Party will provide a report to the Scientific Committee on the exact number and size of fish at the conclusion of the research activities.