



CCSBT-EC/2410/06

DRAFT 2025 AND INDICATIVE 2026-2027 BUDGETS

Purpose

To adopt a general budget for 2025 and consider indicative budgets for 2026 and 2027.

Introduction

The Extended Scientific Committee (ESC) met from 2-5 September 2024 and updated its three-year workplan for scientific meetings and projects to be funded by the Extended Commission (EC). The ESC's estimates of the resources required for this workplan are provided at **Attachment A**.

The Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG) met from 4-7 June 2024 and developed its workplan for ERS Tech meeting and the Spatially Explicit Fisheries Risk Assessment (SEFRA), which requested funding by the EC along with the FAO funded CCSBT Seabird Project. The ERSWG's estimates of the resources required for this workplan are provided at **Attachment B**.

The draft budget for 2025 and indicative budgets for 2026 to 2027 are presented at **Attachments C** and **D** respectively. The budgets include the funding required for the CCSBT's usual business, including the ESC's three-year resource requirements.

Draft Budget for 2025

The draft general budget for 2025 is provided at **Attachment C**. The budget assumes that all 2025 meetings will proceed as physical meetings¹.

The budget is presented below in four sections:

1. Proposed changes in expenditure since the interim draft budget for 2025 provided in Circular #2024/36;
2. Proposed variation in expenditure between 2024 and 2025;
3. Areas of possible reduced expenditure in 2025; and
4. Proposed income for 2025.

(1) Changes in expenditure since the interim draft budget for 2025 provided in Circular #2024/36

The draft budget for 2025 contains \$128,000 less expenditure than the interim draft budget for 2025 that was provided in Circular #2024/36. These changes in expenditure are primarily due to updates in the science workplan at ESC 29 and revised estimates from providers, including:

- Reduced length of next ESC meeting to four days (-\$41,000);

¹ Noting that the ERS technical meetings was initially planned as a hybrid meeting.

- Increase in estimate of Gene Tagging costs (+\$40,000)
- Reduction in estimate of Close-Kin project costs (-\$101,000); and
- Reduction in sampling and aging of otoliths costs (-\$66,000);

In addition, the following revisions have been made to non-science related expenditure:

- Update to Staffing Costs estimate based on latest UN rates (-\$15,000);
- Adding cost estimate for QAR of Indonesia transshipment trial (+\$40,000); and
- Increasing eCDS development budget to allow additional changes to system for importers (+\$15,000).

(2) Forecasted variation in expenditure between 2024 and 2025

As shown in Figure 1 below, the CCSBT's expenses have been steadily increasing since 2013 with the exception of the pandemic years that saw a pronounced drop due to the cancellation of physical meetings. The CCSBT began to shift from a Member-funded science delivery model to one that is Commission funded in 2013 with the first contribution towards the aerial survey. Since then, the science costs have increased approximately tenfold and now represent the second highest expense after Secretariat costs.

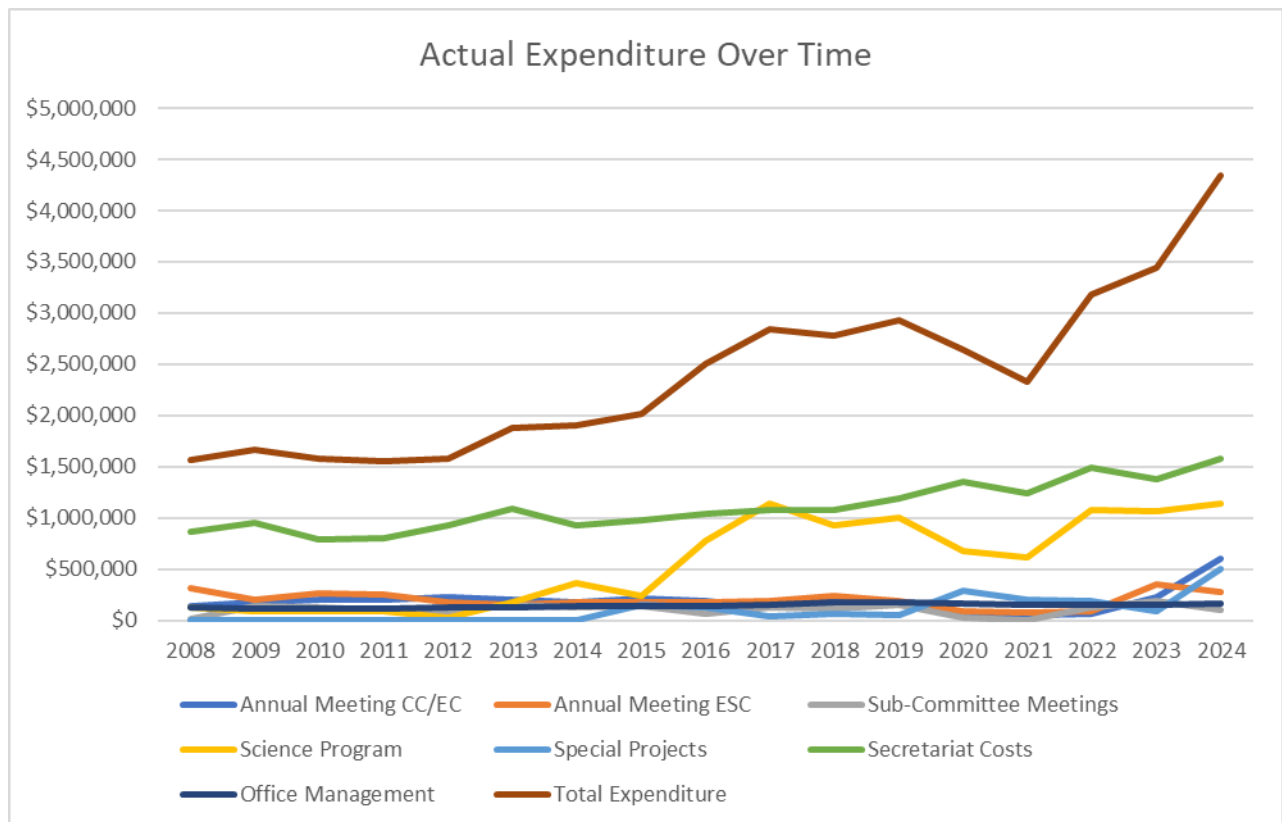


Figure 1: CCSBT Expenditure Trends by Spending Category

The draft 2025 budget (based on all proposed expenditures to date) would result in an 8% increase in Total Expenditure from the previous year. Members are also reminded that this follows the 19% increase (2024 approved budget vs. 2023 approved budget) in Total Expenditure approved by the FAC in 2024.

This level of increase cannot be sustained without a matching increase in contributions or further reductions in cash reserves (which are already below the level required to sustain six months of expenses). The Secretariat has once again identified a number of potential changes to reduce costs both in the coming year and in future years.

The main variations in expenditure between the approved expenditure for 2024 and the expenditure forecasted for 2025 are summarised below.

CCSBT Meetings

Part of the increase in expenditure in 2025 relates to the cost of various subsidiary body meetings that have been proposed.

Members have previously agreed to introduce a technical meeting (ERS Tech) in the alternating year where an ERSWG is not held and that this group meet virtually. This year's ERSWG has requested that the 2025 ERS Tech meeting be held in person with Japan providing a venue.

The Secretariat has also budgeted a meeting of the TCWG in 2025, although this has yet to be discussed or formally requested by the CC.

Members should also note that this year's Seattle OMMP meeting costs were paid from the OM update project and future OMMP meetings will revert back to the previous reporting practice for meeting costs.

Science Program

The overall estimated cost of the science program for 2025 is 10% less than 2024 and this is due in large part to some of the projects reaching the end of their term. The 2025 year will see the OM upgrade project, the otolith-based aging workshop, the CPUE series development and the spawning ground capacity building project wrap up.

These savings are somewhat offset by increases in the costs associated with the gene tagging and close-kin projects.

Special Projects

The increase in Special Project expenditure is linked to the FAO funded Seabird Project and a top-up of the Meeting Participation Fund.

Secretariat Costs

The Secretariat's costs are forecast to increase by 15% in 2025 and this is overwhelming due to a recent adjustment in the UN pay scale for Australia. Home leave expenses will also be higher in 2025 to cover travel for Japanese professional staff and family. The Staff Liability Fund also requires replenishing after this year's departure of the Compliance Manager.

Office Management Costs

The office management costs for 2025 are expected to be similar to 2024 with some additional costs forecast to allow for an office relocation.

(3) Areas of possible reduced expenditure in 2025

The following table provides an unranked list of potential areas of cost reductions.

Expenditure Item	Cost estimate	Potential savings	Comment
ERS Tech Meeting	\$61,000	\$51,000	This is a new request from ERSWG to support additional work on the Seabird Risk Assessment. Members may wish to revert to previous decision for these meetings to be virtual.
OMMP Technical Meeting	\$104,000	\$20,000	Remove funding for ESC Chair to attend. For context, previous ESC Chair did not attend meeting of the OMMP.

Expenditure Item	Cost estimate	Potential savings	Comment
Technical Compliance Working Group (TCWG) meeting	\$46,000	\$46,000	The Compliance Committee has yet to consider whether the TCWG should meet in 2025.
Long-Term Gene Tagging Project	\$780,000	Up to \$780,000	The gene tagging program operates on a 3-year contract cycle which ends in 2024. The proposal from CSIRO represents an increase from the previous contract even though efforts were made to keep costs down by reducing sample sizes. The increase is primarily due to higher operating costs and a reduction in the in-kind contribution from CSIRO. Member should use this contract renewal opportunity to assess project needs. Discussion on this topic can be found in paragraphs 130-138 of the Report from ESC 29.
Close kin sampling, sequencing and identification	\$173,000	Up to \$173,000	Although this project is contracted annually and does not have the timing pressures of gene tagging, Members may wish to also reassess their objectives for the work based on the most recent discussions at ESC 29.
Seabird Risk Assessment	\$25,000	\$25,000	This is a new project requested by the ERSWG to support additional modeller development work for the Seabird Risk Assessment. The \$25,000 figure is over and above the reallocation of \$95,000 from the FAO Seabird Project.
Meeting Participation Fund	\$25,000	\$25,000	The MPF Resolution states that the fund shall be financed by voluntary contributions from Members and such other sources as the Commission may identify. The initial fund held \$50,000 and currently holds \$5,000. The Secretariat has suggested a top-up to \$25,000 but Members may wish to consider delaying this contribution to a future year.
Indonesia Transshipment QAR	\$40,000	\$40,000	The Secretariat has estimated the cost of a targeted QAR at \$40,000. This new project reflects outcomes of discussions at CCSBT 30. Members may wish to consider foregoing the QAR and relying instead on the reporting from the Secretariat along with the assessment from IOTC.
Open-access CDS Tag Number Search	\$11,000	\$11,000	Members asked that the Secretariat explore costs for this new functionality. Suggest that this work may possibly benefit from a delay until the implementation of eCDS and the work be postponed until such time.

(4) Proposed income for 2025

Overall, the CCSBT continues to carry a fundamental imbalance with its ratio of contributions to expenditures as shown in Figure 2.

As stated in previous FAC meetings, current Member contribution levels are not sufficient to cover the current annual running costs of the CCSBT. The Contributions Stabilisation Fund (CSF) would need to be used in its entirety in 2025 along with a substantial withdrawal from cash reserves in order to cover forecasted expenditures if Members do not find savings.

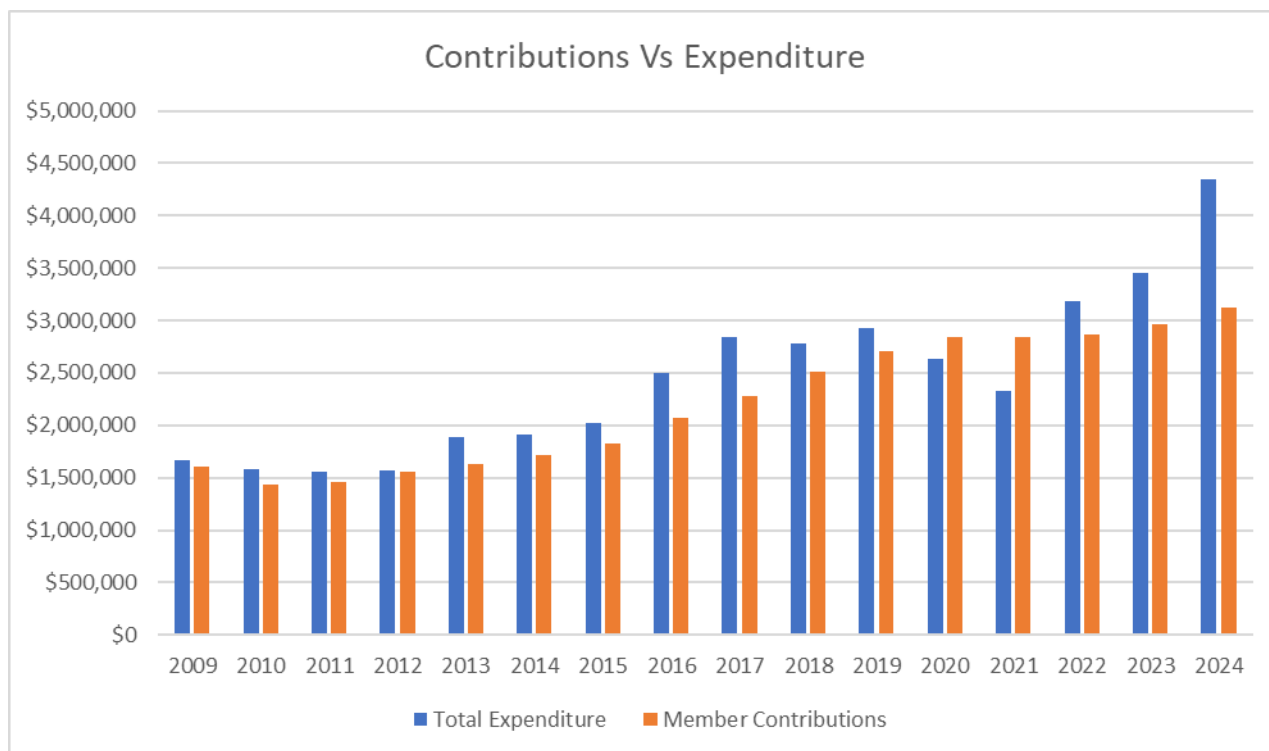


Figure 2: Actual Expenditure vs Member Contributions received.

The Secretariat recommends that increases in Member contributions remain at a minimum of 5% for the foreseeable future and that Members reduce costs in the short term.

(5) Annual Report on Status of Meeting Participation Fund (MPF)

In accordance with the Resolution on the Establishment of a Meeting Participation Fund for Developing States of CCSBT Members, the following details are provided for Member consideration.

Key Fund Indicators:

- The initial contribution to the MPF in 2023 was \$50,000 as agreed at CCSBT 29.
- The fund was utilised on two occasions in 2024 to support attendance at OMMP by two representatives from Indonesia, and one representative from South Africa at ERSWG (South Africa also self-funded a second participant to ERSWG).
- Approximately \$5,000 remains in the MPF.

The Chairs of the OMMP (Dr Ana Parma) and ERSWG (Dr Martin Cryer) have both commented on the valuable contributions made by MPF-sponsored participants at their respective meetings.

Indicative Budget for 2026 to 2027

An indicative budget for 2026 and 2027 is provided at **Attachment D**.

The indicative costs for 2026 and 2027 assume continuation of standard CCSBT meeting practises, planned projects and staff arrangements, as well as known changes to these arrangements. The following additional assumptions have been made for 2026 and 2027:

2026

- The ESC (4 days) and CC/EC meetings will be held in the European Union. The CCSBT will pay for meeting costs up to the costs associated with an equivalent meeting held in Canberra. Costs are based on the most recent Canberra meeting cost benchmark plus an increase of 5% for inflation.
- Three sub-committee meetings will be held in 2026, these being an ERSWG meeting, an OMMP meeting, and a one-day Technical Compliance Working Group (TCWG) meeting held immediately prior to the annual Compliance Committee meeting.
- Some ongoing funding to improve and fix and bugs to the eCDS will be required.
- The Japanese Market survey is not included as the current agreed activities related to this survey conclude in 2025.
- Funds received from the FAO are based on all activities having been delivered in 2025 (noting that to date the project has yet to achieve this).
- Where other information is not available, costs are based on the 2025 estimates plus an allowance of 5% for inflation.

2027

- The ESC (5 days) and CC/EC meetings will be held in South Africa. The CCSBT will pay for meeting costs up to the costs associated with an equivalent meeting held in Canberra. Costs are based on the 2026 Canberra meeting cost estimate plus an increase of 5% for inflation.
- Three sub-committee meetings will be held during 2027, these being an ERS Tech, an OMMP meeting, and a one-day Technical Compliance Working Group (TCWG) meeting held immediately prior to the annual Compliance Committee meeting.
- The Japanese Market survey is not included as the current agreed activities related to this survey conclude in 2025.
- Some ongoing funding to improve and fix and bugs to the eCDS will be required.
- Where other information is not available, costs are based on the 2026 estimates plus an allowance of 5% for inflation.

The indicative total expenditure for 2026 and 2027 is approximately \$4,135,000 and \$4,020,000 respectively.

The indicative income for 2026 and 2027 assumes a 5.0% increase in Membership contributions each year.

Alternative Sources of Income – Joining Fee

Recognising the financial pressures on the Commission and its Members, the Executive Secretary continues to explore potential alternative sources of funding. One such option that has yet to be considered at CCSBT is the introduction of an initial joining fee for new Members joining in the future. This would involve the payment of a one-time joining fee (set as either a fixed sum or percentage of the current budget) payable at the time of acceding to the Convention.

Initial investigations suggest that there is no existing precedent in the context of RFMOs for such a fee and therefore it is difficult to determine how such a scheme would be interpreted in the context of the Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA).

Should Members support this idea in principle, the Executive Secretary will develop a proposal for consideration at CCSBT 32. In developing this proposal, the Executive Secretary will be seeking advice from those with expertise in international law and may be required to fund some consultancy work. No additional budget item has been suggested at this stage and any costs towards this project will need to be met through savings found under existing budget line items.

The Executive Secretary would also ask that Members with an interest and/or expertise in this area contact the Secretariat to discuss how best to support this exercise. The Executive Secretary has also had informal conversations with members of the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources & Security (ANCORS) at the University of Wollongong on this topic and they have indicated an interest in potentially supporting the initial analysis.

Prepared by the Secretariat

ESC's three-year workplan, including resource requirements

(abbreviations: Sec=Secretariat Staff, Interp=Interpretation, Ch=Independent ESC Chair, P=Independent Advisory Panel, MPCoord=MP Coordinator, CECoord=CPUE Coordinator, C=Consultant, Cat=Catering only, FM=full meeting costs – venue & equipment hire etc., VEH=venue & equipment hire etc., FreeV=Venue & some equipment at no cost, Contracted=CCSBT contract with CSIRO, inf=informal meeting)

	2025	2026 (Indicative only)	2027 (Indicative only)
Regular Meetings			
ESC Meeting	4 days FM: 1Ch, 3P, 1C, 3 Interp, 3 Sec	4 days FM: 1Ch, 3P, 1C, 3 Interp, 3 Sec	5 days FM: 1Ch, 3P, 1C, 3 Interp, 3 Sec
ESC Meeting Chair's report	1Ch	1Ch	1Ch
June/July OMMP Meeting in Seattle (no Sec, no Interp)	5 days Cat: 3P, 1C, 1Ch + 3C Prep Days	5 days Cat: 3P, 1C, 1Ch + 5C Prep Days	5 days Cat: 3P, 1C, 1Ch + 4C Prep Days
Ongoing Essential SRP Projects requiring CCSBT resources			
Gene Tagging	\$780,000	\$785,000	\$785,000
Close-kin sampling, sequencing, and identification	\$173,000	\$290,000	\$227,000
Collection and aging of Indonesian otoliths	\$0	\$52,000	\$41,000
SRP Projects requiring CCSBT resources			
OM Specification and software upgrade (no Interp at meetings)	\$30,000 for: • 20C, 2MPCoord • 2*2hr online meetings (3P,1C, 1Ch, Sec)	-	-
UAM - Update NCNM estimates of unaccounted (fishing) mortality (simple update of GLM analysis)	-	\$25,000 for: • 25C	-
CPUE index development	\$30,000 for: • 20C, 2CECoord	TBD	-
Capacity building for Southern Bluefin Tuna Spawning Ground Monitoring Program	\$35,000 (carry forward) • Training and supervision of enumerators • Capacity building and analytical support for review of catch monitoring program	-	-

SEFRA workplan, including resource requirements

(abbreviations: Sec=Secretariat Staff, Interp=Interpretation, Ch=Independent ERSWG Chair, C=Consultant, Cat=Catering only, FM=full meeting costs – venue & equipment hire etc., VEH=venue & equipment hire etc., FreeV=Venue & some equipment at no cost, inf=informal meeting)

	2024	2025
Archiving 2022-24 Assessment	NZ, Sec	-
Data prep AU, ZA, KR	AU, ZA, KR. Possible assistance from JP/NZ	AU, ZA, KR. Possible assistance from JP/NZ
ERSTech	-	5 days in-person (FreeV, no Interp, CH, 10C, 1Sec)
Model development		40 contractor days
Data compilation		Members
Initial model runs and review		Members 20 contractor days
Report outputs of 2022-24 assessment to ACAP and tRFMOs	Members	Members
Establish collaboration with ACAP for biological data/distribution	AU, JP, NZ, ZA, ACAP, BLI	20 contractor days

In addition to the table above, ERSWG supports the transition of SEFRA to the CCSBT Seabird Project funded as part of the ABNJ Common Oceans Project in 2025 to maximise the use of resources available as part of element 4 for this project.

Draft 2025 Budget**Income**

	Approved 2024 Budget	Forecasted 2025 Budget	Variation
Contributions from Members	\$3,117,408	\$3,273,278	5%
Japan	\$892,982	\$937,631	5%
Australia	\$892,982	\$937,631	5%
New Zealand	\$253,898	\$266,593	5%
Korea	\$273,078	\$286,732	5%
Fishing Entity of Taiwan	\$273,078	\$286,732	5%
Indonesia	\$243,000	\$255,150	5%
European Union	\$118,272	\$124,186	5%
South Africa	\$170,118	\$178,624	5%
Staff Assessment Levy	\$151,700	\$156,000	3%
Carryover from previous year	\$90,640	\$46,000	-49%
Voluntary contributions from Members	\$0	\$22,000	N/A
Contribution Stabilisation Fund	\$638,508	\$268,500	-58%
FAO Funded Project	\$185,142	\$185,142	0%
Interest on investments	\$100,000	\$100,000	0%
Withdrawal from Cash Reserves	\$0	\$570,580	N/A
TOTAL GROSS INCOME	\$4,283,398	\$4,621,500	8%

Expenditure	Approved 2024 Budget	Forecasted 2025 Budget	Variation
Annual Meeting - (CC/EC/CCSBT)	\$412,000	\$433,000	5%
ESC/SC Meeting	\$435,000	\$366,000	-16%
SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS			
	\$142,100	\$211,000	48%
ERSWG Meeting	\$128,600	\$0	-100%
ERS Tech Meeting	\$10,000	\$61,000	510%
SFMWG Meeting	\$0	\$0	N/A
OMMP Technical Meeting	\$0	\$104,000	N/A
TCWG Meeting	\$3,500	\$46,000	1214%
Science Program	\$1,169,600	\$1,049,000	-10%
Operating Model Software upgrade	\$155,000	\$30,000	-81%
Development of the CPUE series	\$40,000	\$30,000	-25%
SBT otolith-based aging workshop	\$32,000	\$0	-100%
Tagging program coordination	\$1,000	\$1,000	0%
Long-Term Gene Tagging Project	\$720,000	\$780,000	8%
Close-kin sampling/DNA sequencing	\$104,600	\$173,000	65%
Close-kin identification & exchange	\$35,000	\$0	-100%
Sampling and aging of Indonesian Otoliths	\$20,300	\$0	-100%
Capacity Building for Spawning Ground	\$61,700	\$35,000	-43%
SPECIAL PROJECTS	\$507,185	\$719,000	42%
Meeting Participation Fund	\$17,400	\$25,000	44%
CDS Tag and Market Survey in JP	\$30,450	\$31,000	2%
On-line data system maintenance	\$5,000	\$5,000	0%
Trial eCDS development	\$42,000	\$40,000	-5%
FAO Funded Seabird Project	\$412,335	\$542,000	31%
Seabird Risk Assessment	\$0	\$25,000	N/A
Indonesia Transshipment QAR	\$0	\$40,000	N/A
Open-access CDS Tag Number Search	\$0	\$11,000	N/A
SECRETARIAT COSTS	\$1,455,625	\$1,669,200	15%
Secretariat staff costs	\$921,713	\$1,072,000	16%
Staff assessment levy	\$151,700	\$156,000	3%
Employer social security	\$238,512	\$252,000	6%
Insurance -worker's compensation	\$19,700	\$20,000	2%
Travel/transport	\$38,000	\$32,000	-16%
Translation of meeting reports	\$16,000	\$16,000	0%
Training	\$2,000	\$2,000	0%
Home leave allowance	\$7,000	\$16,200	131%
Other employment expense	\$3,000	\$3,000	0%
Recruitment Costs	\$0	\$0	N/A
Staff liability fund (accumulating)	\$58,000	\$100,000	72%

OFFICE MANAGEMENT COSTS	\$161,890	\$174,300	8%
Lease & Storage	\$73,564	\$75,000	2%
Property Insurance	\$2,500	\$2,500	0%
Office Management	\$14,326	\$18,500	29%
Financial Services	\$39,500	\$40,000	1%
New/replacement assets	\$7,000	\$11,300	61%
IT & Communications	\$25,000	\$27,000	8%
Total Expenditure	\$4,283,400	\$4,621,500	8%

Indicative 2026 and 2027 budgets

	Indicative 2026 Budget	Indicative 2027 Budget
Income		
Contributions from Members	\$3,436,942	\$3,608,789
Japan	\$984,513	\$1,033,738
Australia	\$984,513	\$1,033,738
New Zealand	\$279,923	\$293,919
Korea	\$301,068	\$316,122
Fishing Entity of Taiwan	\$301,068	\$316,122
Indonesia	\$267,908	\$281,303
European Union	\$130,395	\$136,915
South Africa	\$187,555	\$196,933
Staff Assessment Levy	\$158,000	\$160,000
Carryover from previous year	\$0	\$0
Voluntary contributions from Members	\$0	\$0
Contribution Stabilisation Fund	\$0	\$0
FAO Funded Project	\$520,000	\$0
Interest on investments	\$100,000	\$100,000
Withdrawal from Cash Reserves		
TOTAL GROSS INCOME	\$4,214,942	\$3,868,789

	Indicative 2026 Budget	Indicative 2027 Budget
Expenditure		
Annual Meeting - (CC/EC/CCSBT)	\$454,650	\$477,383
ESC/SC Meeting	\$384,300	\$420,000
SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS	\$292,530	\$175,375
ERSWG Meeting	\$135,030	\$0
ERS Tech Meeting	\$0	\$10,000
SFMWG Meeting	\$0	\$0
OMMP Technical Meeting	\$109,200	\$114,660
TCWG Meeting	\$48,300	\$50,715

Science Program	\$1,128,000	\$1,054,000
Operating Model Software upgrade	\$0	\$0
Development of the CPUE series	\$0	\$0
SBT otolith-based aging workshop	\$0	\$0
Tagging program coordination	\$1,000	\$1,000
Long-Term Gene Tagging Project	\$785,000	\$785,000
Close-kin sampling/DNA sequencing	\$290,000	\$227,000
Close-kin identification & exchange	\$0	\$0
Sampling and aging of Indonesian Otolith	\$52,000	\$41,000
Capacity Building for Spawning Ground	\$0	\$0
SPECIAL PROJECTS	\$75,500	\$55,000
Meeting Participation Fund	\$25,000	\$25,000
CDS Tag and Market Survey in JP	\$0	\$0
On-line data system maintenance	\$5,000	\$5,000
Trial eCDS development	\$40,000	\$25,000
FAO Funded Seabird Project	\$0	\$0
Seabird Risk Assessment	\$0	\$0
Indonesia Transshipment QAR	\$0	\$0
Open-access CDS Tag Number Search	\$5,500	\$0
SECRETARIAT COSTS	\$1,624,000	\$1,661,000
Secretariat staff costs	\$1,064,000	\$1,085,000
Staff assessment levy	\$158,000	\$160,000
Employer social security	\$246,000	\$250,000
Insurance -worker's compensation	\$20,000	\$21,000
Travel/transport	\$32,000	\$32,000
Translation of meeting reports	\$17,000	\$17,000
Training	\$2,000	\$2,000
Home leave allowance	\$7,000	\$16,000
Other employment expense	\$3,000	\$3,000
Recruitment Costs	\$0	\$0
Staff liability fund (accumulating)	\$75,000	\$75,000
OFFICE MANAGEMENT COSTS	\$175,600	\$178,100
Lease & Storage	\$78,000	\$80,000
Property Insurance	\$2,600	\$2,600
Office Management	\$15,000	\$16,000
Financial Services	\$42,000	\$44,000
New/replacement assets	\$9,000	\$5,500
IT & Communications	\$29,000	\$30,000
Total Expenditure	\$4,134,580	\$4,020,858