



CCSBT–CC/2510/13

Secretariat Update on the Enhancements to the Existing Transshipment Memorandum/Letter of Understanding with ICCAT and the IOTC

1. Introduction

The Eighteenth meeting of the Compliance Committee (CC18) agreed to a Workplan item for the Secretariat to:

“Examine Transshipment MoUs with ICCAT and IOTC with a view to enhancing them to allow IOTC/ICCAT to share Transshipment Supply Declarations with CCSBT.”

This paper provides an update on the work to review and enhance these agreements.

2. Background

In 2023, the CCSBT updated its Transshipment Resolution with text to reflect amendments and updates that both the ICCAT and IOTC made to their Transshipment Resolutions. Specifically, the CCSBT added paragraph 25 that stated that CCSBT would consider the introduction of supply declaration at the Thirty-Second Annual Meeting of the Commission and Extended Commission (CCSBT 32), after taking into account the effectiveness of the supply declaration that were introduced in ICCAT in 2022¹.

IOTC also agreed to introduce requirements for the provision of supply declarations by carrier vessels into their transshipment conservation and management measure (CMM) in May 2024 and these requirements came into effect in September 2024.

During CC18, Members also considered but decided not to include a paragraph on ‘Availability of reports’² (similar to [ICCAT’s paragraph 27](#)). The CCSBT-considered amendment would have required that CCSBT make supply declarations available on the private area of its own website to facilitate the implementation of ‘*Resolution for a CCSBT Scheme for Minimum Standards for Inspection in Port*’. However, Members decided not to add in this paragraph as it would be duplicative of ICCAT’s and IOTC’s existing requirements. Instead, it was decided that a more efficient solution for CCSBT would be to explore a mechanism allowing ICCAT/IOTC to share the supply declarations with CCSBT or potentially allow CCSBT Members to access relevant declarations directly via the ICCAT and IOTC websites. To facilitate either of these processes, details of the sharing arrangement would most likely need to be incorporated into the relevant MoU/LoU.

The Secretariat worked with the ICCAT Secretariat to draft an updated MoU which was subsequently endorsed by the Thirty-First Annual Meeting of the Commission and Extended Commission (CCSBT 31).

The Secretariat advised the Nineteenth Meeting of the Compliance Committee (CC19), the IOTC is no longer able to sign or update collaboration agreements directly, as the IOTC does not have a legal identity independent of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). A draft FAO MOU was provided for consideration by CC19 and

¹ See paragraph 25 of [Recommendation by ICCAT on Amending Recommendation 21-15 on Transshipment](#)

² Which includes the availability of supply declarations

CCSBT31 endorsed the CCSBT Secretariat's continued engagement with IOTC and FAO to execute the high-level MOU between CCSBT and FAO. This would then allow for a technical collaboration agreement to be agreed with the IOTC.

3. Memorandum of Understanding with ICCAT

The updated MOU with ICCAT was executed in early February 2025, following the endorsement of the updated MOU at ICCAT's annual meetings in late 2024. A copy of the updated and executed MOU is included as **Attachment A** to this paper.

Following execution of the MOU, the ICCAT Secretariat notified its CPCs of its intent to grant access to ICCAT Supply Declaration records to the CCSBT Secretariat and allowed CPCs a period to notify any objection to this. No objections were received, and the CCSBT Secretariat was provided access to ICCAT Supply Declaration information in April 2025. This access to ICCAT Supply Declarations is further discussed in paper [CCSBT-CC/2510/14](#).

4. Memorandum of Understanding with FAO

Following the CCSBT annual meetings in 2024, the CCSBT and IOTC Secretariats continued to work together on the draft updated MoU with FAO and the Secretariat was notified early in 2025 that the MoU had been passed through the second stage of operational clearance at FAO. During this process the FAO responded to the CCSBT comments in the template and accepted almost all of the proposed changes. FAO also made some small adjustments to the draft MOU based on updates they had made to their MoU template in August 2024, but these resulted in only minor changes that did not impact the intent of the MoU that was agreed by Members at CCSBT31.

The only substantive change to the MoU that was reviewed by CC19, and agreed by CCSBT31, was the addition to the MoU of a workplan which outlines the broad collaboration areas between IOTC and CCSBT. The Secretariat reviewed and updated the draft workplan that was provided by FAO and an updated workplan and MoU were then provided back to the IOTC Secretariat in mid-January 2025 for consideration by the IOTC Commission. In May 2025, the [Twenty Ninth Session of the Indian Ocean Commission](#) endorsed the workplan for inclusion in the overall MoU to be agreed with FAO³. A copy of the Workplan is included as **Attachment B** to this paper.

Following the approval of the workplan at the IOTC Commission meeting, the documents were sent back to FAO for the next step of the clearance process. At the time of completing this paper, the MoU is still working through this clearance process.

Summary

The Secretariat invites Members to:

- Note the execution of the updated MoU with ICCAT included as **Attachment A**;
- Note the progress of the MoU with FAO and the workplan included as **Attachment B**;

Prepared by the Secretariat

³ See Paragraphs 155 and 156 of the meeting report.

**Updated Memorandum of Understanding between the CCSBT¹ and ICCAT² Secretariats
for Transshipment at sea by Large-Scale Tuna Longline Fishing Vessels (LSTLVs)**

Introduction

1. The ICCAT has adopted a Recommendation³ and implemented a program for transshipment at sea by large-scale longline pelagic fishing vessels (LSTLVs)⁴ within the ICCAT Convention area. The CCSBT has adopted a similar Resolution⁵ for tuna longline fishing vessels with freezing capacity that applies globally to all transshipments involving southern bluefin tuna (SBT). Each Secretariat is in charge of administering the program within its jurisdiction.
2. The two Commissions have overlapping jurisdiction in the Atlantic Ocean, where the CCSBT Resolution and ICCAT Recommendation are almost identical and most vessels that are required to comply with the CCSBT Resolution are also required to comply with the ICCAT Recommendation.
3. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been established to minimise the duplication of work and to minimise the associated costs for those that are required to comply with both the CCSBT Resolution and ICCAT Recommendation.

Scope of this Memorandum of Understanding

4. This MOU applies to transshipments at sea involving southern bluefin tuna (SBT) within the ICCAT Convention area, by LSTLVs with freezing capacity that are Members/Contracting Parties (CPCs)⁶ of both CCSBT and ICCAT and is further restricted to CPCs that are participating in both CCSBT's and ICCAT's regional observer program.
5. CCSBT and ICCAT will notify each other of any changes in their Members/CPCs that may affect the application of this MOU.

Arrangement between CCSBT and ICCAT

6. All provisions of the ICCAT transshipment Recommendation will continue to apply to transshipments at sea that fall within this arrangement.
7. All provisions of the CCSBT transshipment Resolution will also apply to transshipments at sea that fall within this arrangement, except that:
 - a) To enable a single Transshipment Declaration form to be completed for transshipment by an LSTLV, an ICCAT Transshipment Declaration form may be used instead of the CCSBT Transshipment Declaration form. This only applies while the ICCAT and CCSBT forms remain compatible unless there is agreement to the contrary. Furthermore, transmission of this form by Carrier Vessel masters to the ICCAT Secretariat is deemed to also be a transmission to the CCSBT Secretariat. The ICCAT Secretariat will transmit these documents to the CCSBT Secretariat without delay.
 - b) ICCAT Register Numbers for LSTLVs and Carrier Vessels may be used instead of the CCSBT equivalents. The CCSBT Secretariat will conduct the necessary conversions between ICCAT and CCSBT registration numbers.

¹ Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna.

² International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas.

³ At the time of the latest update to this MOU, the current *Recommendation by ICCAT on Transshipment* (Rec. 21-15).

⁴ Rec. 21-15 refers to large-scale pelagic longline vessels (LSPLVs), while the CCSBT Resolution refers to large scale tuna longline vessels (LSTLVs). This MoU is understood to cover both sets of vessels in their respective contexts.

⁵ Resolution on establishing a program for transshipment by large-scale fishing vessels.

⁶ "Members" includes Cooperating Non-Members and "CPCs" includes Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities and Fishing Entities.

- c) To enable a single set of Transshipment Observers to be used, ICCAT Transshipment Observers will be deemed to be CCSBT Transshipment Observers providing these observers meet the standards established in the CCSBT Transshipment Resolution and providing that the CCSBT Secretariat is informed. In no case will ICCAT Transshipment Observers be required to observe transshipments outside of the ICCAT Convention Area.
 - d) The Consortium that operates the ICCAT program will issue a second report dealing exclusively with transfers that include SBT (i.e. omitting any transfers where no SBT were transhipped) from vessels subject to this MOU. Transmission of such Observer Reports by the Transshipment Observer to the ICCAT Secretariat is deemed to also be a transmission to the CCSBT Secretariat. The ICCAT Secretariat will re-transmit these documents to the CCSBT Secretariat without delay.
 - e) CCSBT is considering⁷ the introduction of a requirement to provide a supply declaration anytime an authorised carrier vessel provides supply services to another vessel at sea that has SBT on board. Supply declarations have been a requirement in ICCAT since 2022 and these are published on the secure part of the ICCAT website.
 - f) Should CCSBT introduce a requirement for supply declarations, then an ICCAT Supply Declaration form may be used instead of the CCSBT Supply Declaration form. This only applies while the ICCAT and CCSBT forms remain compatible, unless there is agreement to the contrary.
8. The combined effect of paragraphs 6 and 7 is that the ICCAT Secretariat and Transshipment Observers will continue to follow the requirements of the ICCAT Recommendation with the additions that:
- a) The ICCAT and CCSBT Secretariats will advise each other regarding any planned or actual changes to their Recommendations/Resolutions for at sea transshipment including the Transshipment Declaration form.
 - b) The ICCAT Secretariat will transmit copies of Observer Deployment requests, Transshipment Declarations and Observer Reports for all transshipments involving SBT to the CCSBT Secretariat without delay.
 - c) In addition to the experience and training required by the ICCAT Transshipment at sea Recommendation, ICCAT Transshipment Observers that observe transshipments of SBT will have sufficient experience and knowledge to:
 - identify southern bluefin tuna; and
 - have a satisfactory knowledge of the CCSBT conservation and management measures.
 - d) An up-to-date list of ICCAT Transshipment Observers will be maintained and annually provided to the CCSBT Secretariat by the ICCAT Secretariat.
 - e) When ICCAT is informed that an observer deployment will involve transshipments of SBT, ICCAT will notify CCSBT prior to dispatching the observer so that the CCSBT Secretariat can check the validity of authorisations of the Fishing Vessels and Carrier Vessels against the published list of CCSBT Authorised Fishing Vessels and CCSBT Authorised Carrier Vessels respectively.
 - f) To support CCSBT in their consideration, and potential introduction of, Supply Declarations, the ICCAT Secretariat will provide to nominated and authorised staff within the CCSBT Secretariat, access to the supply declaration data held on the secure part of the ICCAT website. The access to, and use of, this data by CCSBT shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Rules and Procedures for the Protection, Access to, and Dissemination of Data Compiled by ICCAT and the Rules and Procedures for the Protection, Access to, and Dissemination of Data Compiled by the CCSBT.
 - g) In addition to tasks specified in the ICCAT Transshipment Recommendation, Transshipment Observers that observe transshipments of SBT will:

⁷ Currently proposed to be considered at CCSBT 32 in 2025 taking into account the effectiveness of the supply declaration introduced in ICCAT.

- Conduct checks on the Fishing Vessel intending to tranship in accordance with section 6 a) i) of Annex 2 of the CCSBT Transhipment Resolution.
 - Certify the transhipment verification section of the CCSBT CDS documentation to indicate that the transhipment details (date, name and registration of carrier vessel) were filled in correctly and that the transhipment of product was observed according to the CCSBT Transhipment Resolution⁸.
9. Additional costs imposed on the ICCAT observer program resulting from this MOU will be covered by CCSBT. The costs associated with additional training, additional reports, and insurance required for observers, will be calculated by the Consortium that operates the ICCAT program and transmitted to the CCSBT Secretariat via the ICCAT Secretariat. The CCSBT Secretariat will be responsible for recovering these costs from the CPCs concerned.
 10. The ICCAT and CCSBT Secretariats will cooperate to improve the efficiency of the sharing of data that is covered by this MOU, provided that it remains consistent with the provisions of this MOU and each organisations respective procedures and data and confidentiality rules.
 11. This MOU comes into effect for twelve months from the date of entry into force noted below. It will be automatically renewed for another twelve months each year, unless otherwise decided by either the CCSBT or ICCAT Secretariat and informed to the other in writing. Either of the Secretariats may terminate the MOU at any time by written notice to the other Secretariat.
 12. This MOU replaces that signed on 1 July 2015 from the date of its entry into force.
 13. Date of entry into force: 4 Feb 2025

Signed and duly dated:



Dominic Vallières
Executive Secretary
Commission for the Conservation of Southern
Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)

Date: 04/02/2025



Camille Jean Pierre Manel
Executive Secretary
International Commission for the Conservation of
Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

Date: 29 January 2025

⁸ A discrepancy between the stated product on the CDS document and the quantities recorded by the observer would be recorded in the observer's report (not the CDS document) and would not prevent the observer from signing the CDS document.

Annex I. – Workplan

On the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between CCSBT and FAO and in view of the need to ensure that collaboration through partnerships are based on areas of mutual interest benefiting and synergizing FAO's work, as outlined in the legal agreement signed, the areas of collaborative activities indicated in this Workplan have been jointly identified for the implementation period established.

Overarching responsibilities
FOR FAO: Executive Secretary, Indian Ocean Tuna Commission and his designated officer: [Title of the designated person]
FOR CCSBT: Executive Secretary, Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna

Objective: Foster reciprocal collaboration to promote sustainable and effective fisheries management through the exchange of data and information, joint research efforts, and the development of conservation and management measures for stocks, species, and fisheries of mutual interest		Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (Targets): SDG14 Live below Water – conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.	
Impact Indicator(s) and target at the end of the period. # of Cooperation Agreements developed and executed outlining specific activities of collaboration		Contribution to FAO’s Strategic Framework Better Production: BP2 Blue Transformation – more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable blue food systems promoted through improved policies and programmes for integrated science-based management, technological innovation, and private-sector engagement. Contribution to CCSBT’s Strategic Plan Operation/Administration of the Commission and Secretariat: the Commission should operate effectively and efficiently, to responsibly manage fishing for SBT. This includes strategies for effective and efficient operation of the Commission, its subsidiary bodies and Secretariat, including harmonisation with other RFMOs.	
Area of cooperation 1: Exchange of data and information about stocks, species, and fisheries of mutual interest and activities related to those stocks			
Activities			
• Exchange of data on stocks, species and fisheries of mutual interests. • Exchange of relevant meeting reports, information, technologies, research data and results, project plans, documents, and publications regarding matters of mutual interest.			
Time frame	Throughout the MoU implementation period	Geographic Scope	IOTC and CCSBT’s Member Nations of the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas

Performance Indicator Cooperation agreement/s developed between IOTC and CCSBT to facilitate the exchange of data. Data exchanged under the cooperation agreement/s developed.		Mean(s) of verification Cooperation Agreement Secretariat reporting on data exchanged	
FAO Contact Executive Secretary, IOTC		CCSBT Contact Executive Secretary, CCSBT	
Area of cooperation 2: Collaboration on research and compliance efforts relating to stocks and species of mutual interest, including stock assessments			
Activities			
- Conduct joint research on stocks and species of mutual interest, including stock assessments. - Exchange of relevant research and compliance data and results (consistent with information-sharing policies) regarding matters of mutual interest. - Facilitation of reciprocal participation as observers in relevant meetings of the Parties, including those of relevant subsidiary bodies.			
Time frame	Throughout the MoU implementation period	Geographic Scope	IOTC and CCSBT’s Member Nations of the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas
Performance Indicator Cooperation agreement/s developed between IOTC and CCSBT to facilitate collaborative research activities. Cooperation agreement/s developed between IOTC and CCSBT to facilitate collaborative compliance activities. Collaborative work completed under the cooperation agreement/s developed.		Mean(s) of verification Cooperation Agreement & Session observer lists Secretariat reporting on collaborative work completed.	
FAO Contact		CCSBT Contact Executive Secretary, CCSBT	
Area of cooperation 3: Conservation and management measures for stocks and species of mutual interest			
Activities			
Jointly develop processes to promote harmonization and compatibility of conservation and management measures where relevant.			
Time frame	Throughout the MoU implementation period	Geographic Scope	IOTC and CCSBT’s Member Nations of the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas

Performance Indicator Processes developed and documented that promote harmonization and compatibility of conservation and management measures (where relevant). Conservation and management measure provisions that are harmonized.		Mean(s) of verification Cooperation Agreement Process documents developed (if applicable) Secretariat reporting on work to harmonize CMMs.
FAO Contact	CCSBT Contact Executive Secretary, CCSBT	

Focal Point Contact List (For internal use only for monitoring purposes. This list will not be attached to the MOU.)

Overarching Responsibilities (Overall Partnership Focal Point)	
FAO Contact	CCSBT Contact
Paul de Bruyn Executive Secretary, the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission IOTC-Secretariat@fao.org Paul.DeBruyn@fao.org (NFITD)	Dominic Vallieres Executive Secretary, the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna dvallieres@ccsbt.org
Area of cooperation 1: Exchange of data and information about stocks, species, and fisheries of mutual interest and activities related to those stocks	
FAO Contact	CCSBT Contact
	As above
Area of cooperation 2: Collaboration on research efforts relating to stocks and species of mutual interest, including stock assessments	
FAO Contact	CCSBT Contact
	As above
Area of cooperation 3: Conservation and management measures for stocks and species of mutual interest	
FAO Contact	CCSBT Contact
	As above