



CCSBT-EC/2510/04

Report from the Secretariat

Overview

This report provides a summary of the main activities undertaken by the Secretariat since the Thirty-Second Annual Meeting of the CCSBT in October 2025.

This report also contains two specific matters for consideration by the Extended Commission (EC), which are:

- Review of the Independent Scientific Advisory Panel whose current term will expire at the end of this year
- Consider whether to add live streaming capability to future CCSBT meetings

Officials of the CCSBT

The following official positions in the CCSBT were nominated, appointed or held during 2025.

Officer	Name	Date nominated / appointed
Chair – Extended Commission	Prof. Indra Jaya	10 October 2024
Chair – Commission	Prof. Indra Jaya	8 August 2025
Vice Chair – Commission	Mr Mandisile Mqoqi	7 August 2025
Vice Chair – Extended Commission	TBD	TBD ¹
Chair – Finance & Administration Committee (FAC)	Mr Neil Hughes	23 August 2024 ²
Chair – Compliance Committee (CC)	Mr Frank Meere	16 October 2015 ³
Chair – SC/ESC	Dr Kevin Stokes	1 November 2017 ⁴
Chair – ERSWG	Dr Martin Cryer	8 February 2023 ⁵

There are no Chairing terms set to expire this year that require the attention of Members.

¹ The Vice Chair is typically appointed from the next Member in the hosting rotation but the EU is unlikely to attend this meeting. This appointment will instead need to be made as part of the initial Heads of Delegation meeting.

² The FAC Chair is appointed one year at a time, either at or before the annual meeting of the Extended Commission. There are no limits to the number of reappointments to this position.

³ The CC Chair is appointed for a three-year term with the possibility of up to two reappointments. The CC Chair's third term expired at the end of CCSBT 31 where Members agreed to allow an additional three-year term.

⁴ The SC/ESC Chair is appointed for a three-year term with the possibility of up to two reappointments. The SC/ESC Chair's third and final term expires on 1 November 2026.

⁵ 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. ERSWG 15 was the first meeting for the ERSWG Chair.

Consultants to the CCSBT

The Secretariat engaged five consultants to assist the CCSBT in selected scientific projects and/or meetings during 2025. 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; and
- A technical consultant (Dr Simon Hoyle) in relation to development of the CCSBT's CPUE series.

This is in addition to the contractual arrangements with CSIRO, which are also managed by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat also manages the contract for Dr Ross Wanless who serves as the Seabird Project Manager for the FAO funded Seabird Project as well as Mr Hyungmin Lee who is seconded to the Secretariat as part of the Secondment Program with the Korean government.

End of Term for Independent Scientific Advisory Panel

The contracts for all three members of the Independent Scientific Advisory Panel (the Panel) are set to expire at the end of this year. Members are asked to consider whether to renew the existing arrangements for a further three-year term. This topic will also be discussed as part of this year's ESC and it is anticipated that the latter will provide guidance to Commissioners on this topic. As part of this discussion, Members may wish to also consider reviewing the scope of the work undertaken by the Panel including Chairing arrangements.

The Terms of Reference for the Advisory Panel (see **Attachment A**) were most recently revised at CCSBT 25 as part of the recruitment process for Dr Cox. A decision was also made at CCSBT 30 to align the timing for the appointment of all three panel members.

Secretariat Staff and Office Management

The Secretariat's staff was comprised of five full-time positions and three casual part-time positions during 2025. These were:

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

Relocation of CCSBT Headquarters

The Secretariat was forced to relocate at the end of 2024 as the previously occupied building was set to undergo major renovations. The Secretariat conducted a property search following CCSBT31 and began its tenancy of the new premises on 15 December 2024. All services were maintained during the relocation and we thank Members for their support during this time of transition. The new premises will provide long-term savings for the Commission, which are reflected as part of the 2026 Budget Paper.

Assessment of Current Workloads

The pressure on Secretariat resources continues to be high particularly with the transition to eCDS and increased science, compliance and ERS related commitments. The Secretariat continues to supplement its core roles with casual, part-time positions which are not seen as a viable long-term solution. However, the eCDS implementation will require the Secretariat to change some processes and the actual long-term implications of this are difficult to forecast at this time. However, in the short-term the eCDS will result in increased demands on the Secretariat due to increased requirements for capability development (priority tasks in the CAP) and to support Member implementation.

The Secretariat resourcing requirements will also be impacted by decisions at this year's annual meetings, particularly related to the Indonesian transshipment trial which has significantly increased transshipment data and information, and also increased the associated monitoring undertaken by the Secretariat.

Financial

The preparation of CCSBT's Financial Statements for 2024 was conducted according to schedule. The Financial Statements were reviewed by the CCSBT's auditor, RSM Australia Pty Ltd and the outcomes of RSM's review identified no items of concern.

A draft revised budget for 2025 and a draft budget for 2026, including indicative budgets for 2026 and 2027 will be provided for the EC's consideration in meeting documents CCSBT-EC/2510/05 and CCSBT-EC/2510/06. Members are encouraged to consult these papers for a more fulsome review of CCSBT's current financial position.

Organisation of CCSBT Meetings

The Secretariat has organised, or is in the process of organising, the following formal CCSBT meetings since CCSBT 31:

Ecologically Related Species Technical Working Group (Wellington, NZ)	7 – 11 April 2025
Fifteenth Operating Model and Management Technical Meeting (Virtual)	3 – 4 July 2025
Thirtieth Meeting of the Scientific Committee, incorporating the Extended Scientific Committee (Virtual)	25 – 30 August 2025
Twentieth Meeting of the Compliance Committee (Bali, Indonesia)	2 - 4 October 2025
Thirty-Second Annual Meeting of the Commission, incorporating the Extended Commission (Bali, Indonesia)	6 - 9 October 2025

Translation of the 2024 meeting reports into Japanese has been completed and the translated reports have been placed onto the CCSBT website.

Organisation of meeting venues in Brussels for 2026 is underway. The Secretariat is currently seeking quotes from venues based on the tentative meeting dates that were agreed intersessionally and notified to Members in Circular #2025/21.

Meeting	City	Tentative meeting date
SC/ESC 31	Brussels, Belgium	Mon. 24 to Fri. 28 August 2026
CC 21	Brussels, Belgium	Thu. 1 to Sat. 3 October 2026
CCSBT 33		Mon. 5 to Thu. 8 October 2026

The Secretariat is also currently seeking a volunteer from the Membership to host the next meeting of the ERSWG early in 2026.

Consideration of Streaming Capacity for Future Meetings

In 2024, the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) of CCSBT 31 recommended:

“FAC noted some interest by Members in an ability to observe meetings remotely. This would be limited to a viewing capacity only, not an interactive platform in which Members or Observer could participate remotely. FAC recommends that the Secretariat be tasked with providing a costing for this activity for consideration by FAC and CCSBT 32.”

CCSBT 31 approved this recommendation as part of the report from the FAC (paragraph 25 and 27 of the CCSBT 31 report).

The Secretariat has provided potential cost estimates for this functionality as part of this year’s proposed budget paper for consideration at the FAC (see paper CCSBT–EC/2510/06).

However, the impacts of live streaming are not financial alone and the Secretariat wishes to encourage Members to discuss wider implications of this decision under this agenda prior to any budgetary discussions during the FAC.

Some of the elements that Members should consider in determining whether to support this change to existing meeting practices include the following:

- **Inability to constrain distribution** – Live streaming of the meetings creates a risk that these videos will be recorded and distributed beyond the list of authorised registered participants.
- **Control over content** – Content from the meetings could be edited and used in a way that aims to harm the Commission.
- **Trade-off between transparency and genuine interest** – Live streaming will increase the level of transparency at CCSBT by allowing a wider range of participants to engage. However, this may lead to additional players whose interest in the fishery may be more tenuous and potentially more requests from organisations who may not meet the threshold for “special competence concerning southern bluefin tuna or competent to contribute to the attainment of the objectives of the Convention” as set out in the CCSBT Rules of Procedure.
- **Barrier to free exchanges between Members** – The CCSBT operates under a framework which values and relies on the ability for Members to express candid views and at times openly challenge each other. Members may become more reticent to engage in these types of exchanges if proceedings are recorded and comments are attributed beyond the norms that currently exist as part of rapporteur practices.

Regular Engagement with Members

The Secretariat continues to encourage regular one-on-one meetings with individual delegations in order to maintain engagement outside of traditional meeting times. Many Members have continued to utilise these opportunities in the last year to the benefit of both Members and the Secretariat.

This type of engagement ensures that the Secretariat is attuned to the needs of Members throughout the year and helps us address potential issues before they become problematic. The Executive Secretary plans to continue the practice in the coming year and encourages all Members to make use of these opportunities.

Projects Managed by Secretariat

The Secretariat managed the contracts for the following projects in 2024/25:

- Long-term gene tagging;
- Close-kin sampling, DNA extraction and sequencing;
- Close-kin identification and exchange;
- Sampling and ageing of Indonesian SBT Otoliths;
- Development of the CPUE series;
- CCSBT Management tag and Market survey in Toyosu Market; and
- FAO Common Oceans Seabird Project.

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 website 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 intersessional activities of the Secretariat and the EC. Thirty-nine Circulars were issued between CCSBT 31 and 5 September 2025.

CCSBT Website

The website continues to be an actively updated and used information tool for both CCSBT Members and the general public. The public side of the CCSBT website was updated immediately after CCSBT 31 to incorporate the results and decisions from the 2024 meetings of the CCSBT.

Following the conclusion of CCSBT 32, the Secretariat will once again make all necessary updates to the CCSBT website to reflect the outcomes of the meeting. Pending the final approval from Members under agenda item 8, this update will also include the relocation of the CCSBT decision compendium from the Private Area of the website to a publicly accessible page (see paper CCSBT-EC/2510/12).

Participation in the Fisheries Resource Monitoring System (FIRMS)

The CCSBT is a partner in FAO's FIRMS system. During 2024/25, 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 31; 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 31, this has included:

- For the CDS:
 - Data entry and upload of all CDS forms and data received from Members and non-members that cooperate with the CDS;
 - Notifying Members of reporting deadlines, running CDS data reconciliations, and following up on errors and missing information and forms, correcting errors based on resubmitted forms and information from Members;
 - Producing 6 monthly and annual CDS reports;
 - Providing advice on the CDS implementation as required.
 - Coordinating the purchase of centralised tags for use with the CDS;
 - Maintenance of the CDS database and continuing development and testing of a trial electronic CDS (eCDS);
 - Notification and follow up with Members on emerging CDS issues.
- For the eSBT:
 - Checking and maintaining validator and seal information entered by Members and notifying Members of updates and changes;
 - Testing and development of the transshipment module; and
 - Ongoing bug fixes.
- 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.
- Monitoring compliance with CCSBT Resolutions and obligations and following up with Members as required.
- Managing initial quota allocations and final catch by vessel/company data and associated access permissions.
- Sending reminders and managing Member carry forward notifications.
- Checking for any submissions in relation to the CCSBT IUU Vessel List Resolution⁶ and implementing the cross-listing provisions of the Resolution.
- Progressing intersessional discussion on the eCDS, including a draft revision of the CDS Resolution to allow for an eCDS.

⁶ Resolution on Establishing a List of Vessels Presumed to have Carried Out Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Activities for Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT).

- Progressing intersessional discussion on the review of the Corrective Actions Policy (CPG3).
- Planning and coordination of the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of the Indonesian Transshipment Trial, including providing data and information to support the review and coordinating engagement with Indonesia.
- Update of the CCSBT Compliance Plan.
- The development and update of the eCDS manual and other resources to support eCDS implementation.
- Drafting letters to each Member to identify compliance matters raised at the preceding CC for that Member to support the development of national reports.
- Producing papers and reports for the Compliance Committee.
- Maintaining compliance relationships with relevant bodies and organisations, and ensuring effective and ongoing engagement with other tuna RFMO Secretariat's where SBT is harvested.

CCSBT Catch Reporting (excluding scientific data exchange)

Monthly Catch Reports

Members are successfully entering and updating their monthly catch reports through the online eSBT system. This system also provides Members with the opportunity to view the reports of other Members. The Secretariat continues to remind Members to provide this information.

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

The Secretariat has provided reminders to each Member to submit this information and following receipt it is loaded to a special section of the private area of the CCSBT website. 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.

Database Developments and Data Exchange

The CCSBT Data CD content and associated documentation was updated and made available to Members for downloading on 31 January 2025. An initial interim update of the Data CD containing information from the 2025 Data Exchange was placed on the private area of the CCSBT website on 18 June 2025.

The Secretariat managed the 2025 scientific data exchange, which involved active exchange of data between Members and the Secretariat mainly between April and late-June. The Secretariat conducted substantial post-processing of the data to produce derived datasets that were required as part of the data exchange.

The annual ERSWG Data Exchange occurred during 2025. Australia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, South Africa and Taiwan 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.

The online database system, eSBT, continues to be used by Members and the Secretariat for the management of CDS validator information, monthly catch report data, and transshipment data. eSBT has undergone minor maintenance during the year and at this stage no new features are planned for 2026. The eSBT project is considered to be finalised and will not be reported on in the future unless new features have been added.

Development of an eCDS for the CCSBT continued in 2025. Members agreed that the eCDS will be implemented on 1-April-2026. A report on progress with development of the eCDS will be provided to the October 2025 meeting of the Compliance Committee.

Prepared by the Secretariat

**SELECTION CRITERIA AND TERM
FOR THE ADVISORY PANEL**

Persons to be selected for the members of the Advisory Panel:

1. Shall not directly or indirectly be employed with a CCSBT Member government or have any other conflict of interest⁷ at the time of appointment nor throughout the term of the contract, or in the previous three years, unless otherwise agreed by the Extended Commission.
2. Must have excellent technical ability in stock assessment;
3. Must have adequate working experience as a scientist involved in stock assessment and fisheries management at the international level;
4. Should ideally have working experience with large pelagic fish resources;
5. Should ideally have familiarity with assessment procedures; harvest strategy and management procedure development and operation; and scientific procedures used in international fishery commissions;
6. Should ideally have specialist skills and experience in CPUE modelling and analysis.

Skills or experience in the following areas is advantageous:

7. Geospatial analysis;
8. Population genetics and/or mark recapture theory;
9. Incorporation of the implications of environmental change in assessments.

External scientists contracted by CCSBT in the past are eligible for selection for the Advisory Panel if they meet the above qualification.

The appointment term is three years and two reappointments are permitted.

⁷ For example, an employee of, or contracted by, a Member government funded agency, organisation or public company.