CCSBT–EC/2510/06

DRAFT 2026 AND INDICATIVE 2027-2028 BUDGETS

Purpose

To adopt a general budget for 2026 and consider indicative budgets for 2027 and 2028.

Introduction

The Extended Scientific Committee (ESC) met from 25 to 30 August 2025 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 draft budget for 2026 and indicative budgets for 2027 to 2028 are presented at **Attachments B** and **C** respectively. The budgets include the funding required for the CCSBT's usual business, including the ESC's three-year resource requirements.

Draft Budget for 2026

The draft general budget for 2026 is provided at **Attachment B**. The budget assumes that all formal 2026 meetings will proceed as physical meetings.

The budget is presented below in four sections:

1. Proposed changes in expenditure since the interim draft budget for 2026 provided in Circular #2025/30;
2. Proposed variation in expenditure between 2025 and 2026;
3. Areas of possible reduced expenditure in 2026; and
4. Proposed income for 2026.

(1) Changes in expenditure since the interim draft budget for 2026 provided in Circular #2025/30

The draft budget for 2026 contains $143,500 more expenditure than the interim draft budget that was provided in Circular #2025/30. These changes in expenditure are based on the updated science workplan developed at ESC 30, including:

- An additional $15,000 towards the conclusion of the Operating Model Software upgrade;
- A further $42,000 for additional CPUE work;
- An increase of $5,000 to the UAM budget (now totalling $30,000);
- A new project aimed at capacity building to assess SBT landings across Indonesian ports ($65,000);
- An increase of $16,500 to add two days to the OMMP meeting; and
- $10,000 towards webinars to evaluate gene tagging alternatives.

The last two items on this list have been suggested in the event that the gene tagging project budget for 2026 remains at $600,000. However, the ESC recommended the full reinstatement of the gene tagging projects and initially indicated the costs associated with this at $785,000 (see **Attachment 10** of ESC 30 report). Further discussions with the research provider (CSIRO) following the conclusion of the ESC suggest that this amount is not sufficient to allow full reinstatement of the project.

The revised costs to fully reinstate the gene tagging project in 2026 are now estimated at $965,000.

Members should note that CCSBT has an existing contracted commitment of $600,000 with CSIRO for 2026 gene tagging work based on decisions made at CCSBT 31. Therefore, an additional $365,000 would need to be added to the 2026 science budget to allow the full reinstatement of the gene tagging program next year.

There were no changes made to any of the expenditures related to Special Projects, Secretariat Costs, or Office Management.

(2) Forecasted variation in expenditure between 2025 and 2026

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.

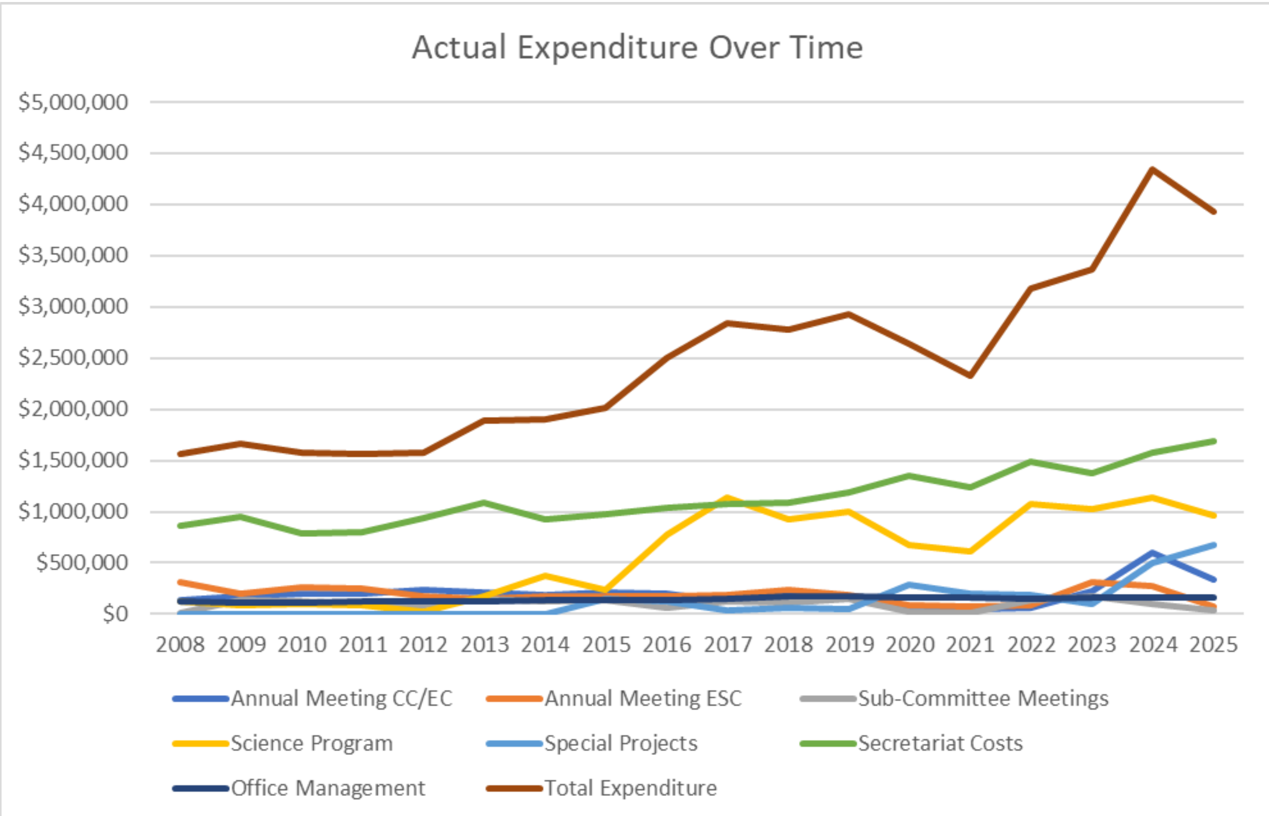

Figure 1: CCSBT Expenditure Trends by Spending Category

The draft 2026 budget (based on all proposed expenditures to date including the full reinstatement of the gene tagging program) would result in a 20% increase in Total Expenditure from the previous year. This level of spending would put the CCSBT at a deficit for 2026 based on expected income.

The main variations in expenditure between the approved expenditure for 2025 and the expenditure forecasted for 2026 are summarised below.

CCSBT Meetings

The increase reflects an increase in the estimated costs associated with venue and equipment hire for meetings held in Canberra, which Members have previously agreed would serve as the ongoing baseline for budgeting of CC-EC meetings. The budget also assumes a return to an in-person ESC meeting.

Part of the increase in meeting expenditure in 2026 also relates to the cost of various subsidiary body meetings that were either not held in 2025 or held virtually. This category includes the ERSWG, which is a biannual meeting and was not held in 2025. The OMMP was delivered virtually in 2025 but is currently budgeted as a full in-person Seattle meeting in the current draft.

The Secretariat has also budgeted a meeting of the TCWG in 2026, although this has yet to be discussed or formally requested by the CC.

Science Program

The overall estimated cost of the science program for 2026 is 26% more than 2025 (note that this figure does not include the increased costs for full reinstatement of the gene tagging program). This is primarily driven by increases in costs associated with close kin analysis and new projects proposed in relation to CPUE, UAM, capacity building, and the evaluation of gene tagging alternatives.

Special Projects

The significant decrease in 2026 expenditure for Special Projects is almost entirely linked to the FAO funded Seabird Project, which is due to terminate at the end of 2025.

The Meeting Participation Fund is also now down to ~$3,000 and Members are asked to consider topping it up to $25,000 in 2026.

The Secretariat has also included the estimated costs of developing a new online public portal to search individual SBT information by CDS tag number on the CCSBT website ($11,000) to reflect the decision made last year to delay this work to align with the introduction of the eCDS.

The Secretariat has also included a new line item this year to capture any potential decisions in relation to Capacity Building Initiatives arising from discussions at ESC or CC. An initial sum of $30,000 has been assigned to this item.

Secretariat Costs

There is a 2% increase to the overall costs of the Secretariat forecasted for 2026 however this is almost entirely attributable to the increase in the Staff Assessment Levy costs which is offset by an equal increase in the Staff Assessment Levy income and therefore has no impact on the overall financial position.

Office Management Costs

A small decrease in Office Management costs has been forecasted based on fewer assets scheduled to reach their end of life in 2026 and ongoing savings from lower office lease costs following the 2025 relocation.

(3) Areas of possible reduced expenditure in 2026

In order to support discussions at the FAC, the Secretariat has identified a number of potential areas to reduce costs both in the coming year and in future years.

The following table provides an unranked list of potential cost reductions:

Expenditure Item	Cost estimate	Potential savings	Comment
ERSWG	$150,800	$150,800	CCSBT 29 agreed to the recommendation from ERSWG 14 “that more regular meetings should be held but to have a hybrid approach for future ERSWG meetings. This involves having a full, face-to-face ERSWG meeting every second year and scientific technical meeting(s) in the intersessional years”.
OMMP Technical Meeting	$122,800	$20,000	Remove funding for ESC Chair to attend. For context, previous ESC Chair did not attend meetings of the OMMP.
Technical Compliance Working Group (TCWG) meeting	$54,400	$54,400	The Compliance Committee has yet to consider whether the TCWG should meet in 2026.
Long-Term Gene Tagging Project	$965,000	$365,000	The current contract with CSIRO for 2026 is for $600,000. The ESC has recommended the full reinstatement of the gene tagging program which would cost an additional $365,000.
Development of CPUE series	$42,000	$42,000	This is a new proposal put forward by the ESC for 2026.
UAM Estimation	$30,000	$5,000	An updated UAM estimate is required in 2026 however costs could be reduced by simply running the existing methodology.
Capacity Building to assess SBT landing across Indonesia ports	$65,000	$65,000	This is a new proposal put forward by the ESC that would expand previous work to additional Indonesian ports.
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 less than $5,000. The Secretariat has initially suggested a top-up to $25,000 in 2026.
Capacity Building Initiatives	$30,000	$30,000	This amount is being proposed as a baseline to support initiatives developed as part of the Capacity Building Plan but could be delayed to a future year.
Open-access CDS Tag Number Search	$11,000	$11,000	Members asked that the Secretariat explore costs for this new functionality. This work could be further delayed until the full implementation of eCDS is complete.

(4) Proposed income for 2026

Although, the CCSBT continues to carry a fundamental imbalance with its ratio of contributions to expenditures as shown in Figure 2, the 2026 income will benefit from multiple one-off payments. This includes the final payment from the FAO to conclude the Seabird Project and the payment of contributions in arrears from 2025. Note that the forecasted payment from the FAO assumes that all planned activities have been delivered and the actual final payment may be less than this amount.

As stated in previous FAC meetings, current Member contribution levels on their own are not sufficient to cover the current annual running costs of the CCSBT. The Contributions Stabilisation Fund (CSF) was used in its entirety in 2025 and future shortfalls will need to be drawn from cash reserves.

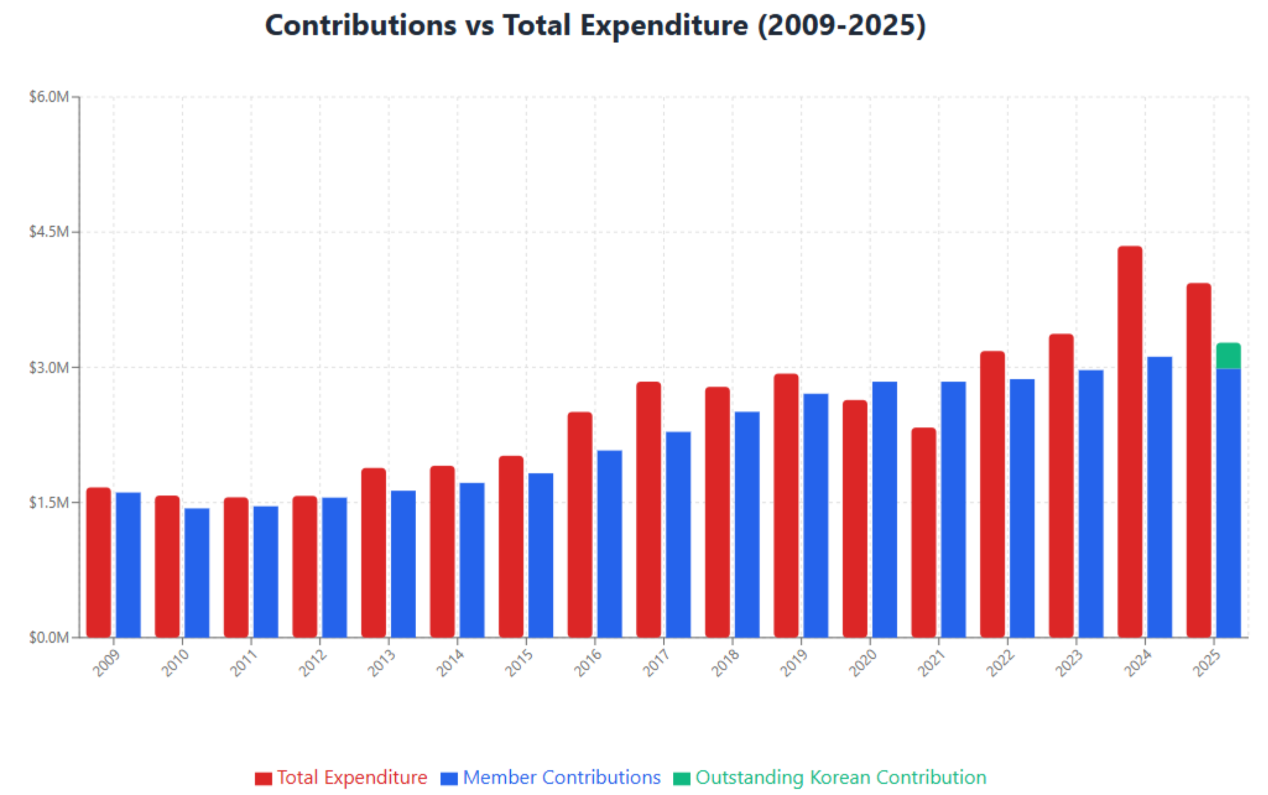

Figure 2: Actual Expenditure vs Member Contributions.

The Secretariat recommends that increases in Member contributions remain at a <u>minimum</u> of 5% for the foreseeable future and that Members continue to seek ways to stabilise or reduce costs in the short term.

<u>(5) Annual Report on Status of Meeting Participation Fund (MPF)</u>

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 once in 2025 to support attendance at ERS-Tech by two representatives from Indonesia.
- Approximately $3,000 remains in the MPF.

The Chair of the ERSWG (Dr Martin Cryer) has commented on the valuable contributions made by MPF-sponsored participants at ERS-Tech in Wellington in 2025. These participants were active in the discussions about the complex statistical models on seabird bycatch being developed and were able to inform the group of the nature of the information that could be available from Indonesia for possible inclusion in the models. Dr Cryer hopes that Indonesian representatives will continue to participate actively in these and other discussions in the future.

Indicative Budget for 2027 to 2028

An indicative budget for 2027 and 2028 is provided at **Attachment D**.

The indicative costs for 2027 and 2028 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 2027 and 2028:

2027

- The ESC (4 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 most recent Canberra meeting cost benchmark plus an increase of 5% for inflation.
- Three sub-committee meetings will potentially be held in 2027, these being an ERS Tech (Virtual), 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.
- Work will begin on the next independent performance review.
- Where other information is not available, costs are based on the 2026 estimates plus an allowance of 5% for inflation.

2028

- The ESC (4 days) and CC/EC meetings will be held in Japan. The CCSBT will pay for meeting costs up to the costs associated with an equivalent meeting held in Canberra. Costs are based on the 2027 Canberra meeting cost estimate plus an increase of 5% for inflation.
- Three sub-committee meetings will be held during 2028, 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 bugs to the eCDS will be required.
- The independent performance review will be finalised.
- Where other information is not available, costs are based on the 2027 estimates plus an allowance of 5% for inflation.

The indicative total expenditure for 2027 and 2028 is approximately $4,170,000 and $4,300,000 respectively.

The indicative income for 2027 and 2028 assumes a 5.0% increase in Membership contributions each year.

Cost Estimates for Streaming Capability at Meetings

In 2024, the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) of the Extended Commission of the 31st Annual Meeting of the Commission (EC31) 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."***

EC 31 approved this recommendation as part of the report from the FAC (paragraph 25 and 27 of the EC 31 report). Wider considerations associated with the adoption of streaming functionality are discussed further as part of the Report from the Secretariat (CCSBT-EC/2510/04).

In order to evaluate the potential costs associated with the addition of streaming functionality at future meetings, the Secretariat has engaged three service providers (in Australia, Japan, and Brussels), either previously utilised or designated for recent/upcoming CCSBT meetings. **Table 1** below presents the cost estimates from each provider, which will be incurred in addition to the standard expenses for in-person meetings.

Table 1. Approximate cost estimates and main equipment/services required/provided

	Daily costs	Main equipment/services
Provider A (Australia)	AUD 2,400	• Platform: Zoom Webinar • Equipment: PTZ camera(s), direct streaming AV mixer, monitor, laptops, cables etc. • Engineer
Provider B (Japan)	AUD 2,300	
Provider C (EU)	AUD 2,550	

As shown in **Table 1**, the daily costs for live streaming are similar across all providers.

Considering CCSBT meetings are between four (e.g. ERSWG and SFMWG) and seven days (CC + EC) in length, the total cost for each meeting would range from approximately AUD $9,200 to AUD $ 17,850.

The draft 2026 budget provided in this paper currently <u>includes</u> the above cost estimates for live streaming in each meeting's cost estimates.

Please note that in order to consider the indicative costs for live streaming, the Secretariat made the following assumptions:

1. Only the plenary meeting in the Main meeting room would be broadcasted;
2. Online audiences would be limited to a viewing capacity only, not an interactive platform in which Members or Observers could participate remotely;
3. Online audiences may choose the hearing language (English or Japanese);
4. No or minimum change to the on-site meeting setup and operation; and
5. The Secretariat staff's burden to manage the online platform during the meeting would be minimal (i.e. limited to starting/closing the online platform and managing admission of participants).

Possible cost-effective option for live streaming in future CCSBT meetings

The key components for live streaming and indicative market prices are shown in **Table 2** below:

Table 2: Key components for meeting live streaming and their indicative market price

Equipment	Indicative market price	Notes
Zoom account	AUD 119 / month	• To host Zoom Webinar.
Laptop	-	• Secretariat's backup laptops may be utilised.
Direct streaming AV mixer	AUD 3,500 – 4,500	• To capture the English/Japanese output from the simultaneous interpretation system/mixer

		and feed it to a laptop as a microphone input for Zoom
Camera	AUD 500 – 2,000	• To capture speakers' image on Zoom. • The price varies widely depending on performance. (Fixed camera: -$500, 360 degree capture camera: -$1500, PTZ camera: -$2000)

If the Secretariat purchases the above equipment, the broadcasting of future meetings could be done with smaller per meeting costs, provided that the sound/interpretation system service provider offers a commonly used system.

Prepared by the Secretariat

Attachment A

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)

	2026	2027 (Indicative only)	2028 (Indicative only)
Regular Meetings			
ESC Meeting	5 days FM: 1Ch, 3P, 1C, 3 Interp, 3 Sec	4 days FM: 1Ch, 3P, 1C, 3 Interp, 3 Sec	4 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 + 5C Prep Days	5 days Cat: 3P, 1C, 1Ch + 4C Prep Days	5 days Cat: 3P, 1C, 1Ch + 4C Prep Days
Ongoing Essential SRP Projects requiring CCSBT resources			
Gene Tagging	$785,000	$785,000	$785,000
Close-kin sampling, sequencing, and identification	$277,000	$238,000	$245,000
Collection and aging of Indonesian otoliths	$46,000	$41,000	$42,000
Evaluation of GT Alternatives	2 additional days at OMMP 2 half day webinars 3P, 1C, 1 Ch 5 prep days	-	-
Review of MP	-	2 half day webinars 3P, 1C, 1 Ch 5 prep days	-
SRP Projects requiring CCSBT resources			
OM Specification and software upgrade *(no Interp at meetings)*	Half day webinar 3P, 1C 9C days	-	-
UAM - Update NCNM estimates of unaccounted (fishing) mortality (simple update of GLM analysis)	$25,000	-	-
Exploring alternative approaches to estimating UAM	$5,000		
CPUE index development	$42,000	-	-
Capacity building for Southern Bluefin Tuna Spawning Ground Monitoring Program	$65,000	-	-

Attachment B

Draft 2026 Budget

Income	Approved 2025 Budget	Revised 2025 Budget	Draft 2026 Budget	Variation (Approved 2025 to Draft 2026)
Contributions from Members	$3,273,278	$2,986,547	$3,436,942	5%
Japan	$937,631	$937,631	$984,513	5%
Australia	$937,631	$937,631	$984,513	5%
New Zealand	$266,593	$266,593	$279,923	5%
Korea	$286,732	$0	$301,068	5%
Fishing Entity of Taiwan	$286,732	$286,732	$301,068	5%
Indonesia	$255,150	$255,150	$267,908	5%
European Union	$124,186	$124,186	$130,395	5%
South Africa	$178,624	$178,624	$187,555	5%
Contributions in Advance	$0	$2,466	$0	N/A
Contributions in Arrears	$0	$0	$286,732	N/A
Staff Assessment Levy	$156,000	$188,800	$184,500	18%
Carryover from previous year	$46,000	$80,000	$3,300	-93%
Voluntary contributions from Members	$22,000	$22,938	$0	N/A
Contribution Stabilisation Fund	$268,500	$268,500	$0	-100%
FAO Funded Project	$185,142	$228,084	$426,000	130%
Interest on investments	$100,000	$120,000	$100,000	0%
Withdrawal from Cash Reserves	$0	$0	$0	N/A
TOTAL GROSS INCOME	$4,050,920	$3,897,335	$4,437,474	10%

Expenditure	Approved 2025 Budget	Revised 2025 Budget	Draft 2026 Budget	Variation (Approved 2025 to Draft 2026)
Annual Meeting - (CC/EC/CCSBT)	$433,000	$330,800	$541,000	25%
ESC/SC Meeting	$77,200	$79,700	$286,000	270%
SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS	$67,700	$41,800	$328,000	384%
ERSWG Meeting	$0	$0	$150,800	N/A
ERS Tech Meeting	$10,000	$16,400	$0	-100%
SFMWG Meeting	$0	$0	$0	N/A
OMMP Technical Meeting	$57,700	$25,400	$122,800	113%
TCWG Meeting	$0	$0	$54,400	N/A

Science Program	$869,000	$966,500	$1,095,000	26%
Operating Model Software upgrade	$30,000	$97,500	$15,000	-50%
Development of the CPUE series	$30,000	$60,000	$42,000	40%
Tagging program coordination	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	0%
Long-Term Gene Tagging Project	$600,000	$600,000	$600,000	0%
Close-kin sampling/DNA sequencing	$173,000	$173,000	$290,000	68%
Sampling and aging of Indonesian Otoliths	$0	$0	$52,000	N/A
UAM Estimation	$0	$0	$30,000	N/A
Capacity Building for Spawning Ground	$35,000	$35,000	$65,000	86%
Evaluation of Gene Tagging Alternatives	$0	$0	$10,000	N/A
SPECIAL PROJECTS	$698,000	$670,700	$226,000	-68%
Meeting Participation Fund	$15,000	$11,700	$25,000	67%
CDS Tag and Market Survey in JP	$31,000	$31,000	$32,000	3%
On-line data system maintenance	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	0%
Trial eCDS development	$40,000	$40,000	$40,000	0%
FAO Funded Seabird Project	$542,000	$539,000	$83,000	-85%
Seabird Risk Assessment	$25,000	$0	$0	N/A
Indonesian Transhipment QAR	$40,000	$44,000	$0	N/A
Capacity Building Initiatives	$0	$0	$30,000	N/A
Open-access CDS Tag Number Search	$0	$0	$11,000	N/A
SECRETARIAT COSTS	$1,669,200	$1,683,200	$1,695,500	2%
Secretariat staff costs	$1,072,000	$1,056,000	$1,074,000	0%
Staff assessment levy	$156,000	$188,800	$184,500	18%
Employer social security	$252,000	$260,000	$253,000	0%
Insurance -worker's compensation	$20,000	$18,000	$20,000	0%
Travel/transport	$32,000	$19,200	$35,000	9%
Translation of meeting reports	$16,000	$16,000	$17,000	6%
Training	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	0%
Home leave allowance	$16,200	$20,200	$7,000	-57%
Other employment expense	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	0%
Staff liability fund (accumulating)	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	0%
OFFICE MANAGEMENT COSTS	$174,300	$162,600	$170,400	-2%
Lease & Storage	$75,000	$67,000	$69,500	-7%
Property Insurance	$2,500	$2,300	$2,400	-4%
Office Management	$18,500	$18,500	$18,500	0%
Financial Services	$40,000	$37,500	$42,000	5%
New/replacement assets	$11,300	$11,300	$8,000	-29%
IT & Communications	$27,000	$26,000	$30,000	11%
Total Expenditure	$3,988,400	$3,935,300	$4,341,900	9%

Attachment C

Indicative 2027 and 2028 budgets

Income	Indicative 2027 Budget	Indicative 2028 Budget
Contributions from Members	$3,608,789	$3,789,229
Japan	$1,033,738	$1,085,425
Australia	$1,033,738	$1,085,425
New Zealand	$293,919	$308,615
Korea	$316,122	$331,928
Fishing Entity of Taiwan	$316,122	$331,928
Indonesia	$281,303	$295,368
European Union	$136,915	$143,760
South Africa	$196,933	$206,779
Staff Assessment Levy	$190,000	$195,000
Carryover from previous year	$0	$0
Voluntary contributions from Members	$0	$0
Contribution Stabilisation Fund	$0	$0
FAO Funded Project	$0	$0
Interest on investments	$100,000	$100,000
Withdrawal from Cash Reserves		
TOTAL GROSS INCOME	$3,898,789	$4,084,229

Expenditure	Indicative 2027 Budget	Indicative 2028 Budget
Annual Meeting - (CC/EC/CCSBT)	$557,230	$573,947
ESC/SC Meeting	$294,580	$303,417
SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS	$175,232	$213,037
ERSWG Meeting	$0	$155,324
ERS Tech Meeting	$10,000	$0
SFMWG Meeting	$0	$0
OMMP Technical Meeting	$109,200	$0
TCWG Meeting	$56,032	$57,713

Science Program	$1,065,000	$1,073,000
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	$238,000	$245,000
Sampling and aging of Indonesian Otoliths	$41,000	$42,000
Capacity Building for Spawning Ground	$0	$0
SPECIAL PROJECTS	$163,000	$149,000
Meeting Participation Fund	$25,000	$25,000
CDS Tag and Market Survey in JP	$33,000	$34,000
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 Transhipment QAR	$0	$0
Performance Review	$60,000	$60,000
Open-access CDS Tag Number Search	$0	$0
SECRETARIAT COSTS	$1,736,920	$1,805,957
Secretariat staff costs	$1,116,960	$1,161,638
Staff assessment levy	$191,880	$199,555
Employer social security	$263,120	$273,645
Insurance -worker's compensation	$20,800	$21,632
Travel/transport	$36,000	$37,000
Translation of meeting reports	$17,680	$18,387
Training	$2,080	$2,163
Home leave allowance	$7,280	$7,571
Other employment expense	$3,120	$3,245
Staff liability fund (accumulating)	$78,000	$81,120
OFFICE MANAGEMENT COSTS	$177,216	$184,305
Lease & Storage	$72,280	$75,171
Property Insurance	$2,496	$2,596
Office Management	$19,240	$20,010
Financial Services	$43,680	$45,427
New/replacement assets	$8,320	$8,653
IT & Communications	$31,200	$32,448
Total Expenditure	$4,169,178	$4,302,663