Proposal: Introductory workshop to otolith-based ageing of southern bluefin tuna

A. Start year – 2027

B. Duration – 1 year

C. General category – operating model (OM)

D. Sub-category – Biology

E. Project title – **Introductory workshop to otolith-based ageing of southern bluefin tuna**

F. Problem – The second CCSBT workshop on otolith-based ageing of southern bluefin tuna, held online in June 2025, was primarily designed for scientists already involved in SBT ageing. The last dedicated technical workshop focused on SBT age estimation was conducted in 2002, more than two decades ago. Since then, there have been changes in technical expertise within Member organisations, including the retirement or transition of experienced age readers and the introduction of new scientists and technicians who have not had the opportunity to receive formal training in SBT ageing techniques. As a result, there is a growing need to transfer and preserve institutional knowledge and ensure that new practitioners are equipped with the foundational skills required to undertake SBT ageing in a consistent and scientifically robust manner.

G. Objectives – To increase the number of appropriately trained scientists and technicians capable of collecting, preparing, interpreting and ageing southern bluefin tuna otoliths in accordance with standardised CCSBT procedures. Develop practical skills in extracting, handling, storing and preparing SBT otoliths. Identify and interpret annual growth zones and produce preliminary age estimates using CCSBT standards. Introduce methods for evaluating accuracy, precision and reader consistency, including appropriate quality-control procedures. Standardise practices across Member laboratories and build capacity to produce reliable, comparable age data.

H. Rationale – Biological sampling and ageing studies are undertaken by several Member countries, and age data must therefore be generated using consistent, standardised and scientifically defensible procedures.

I. Impact-Scale – Medium

J. Impact-Timing –Med2-4 (2-4 years)

K. Priority – *to be completed at ESC meetings*

L. Rank – *to be completed at ESC meetings*

M. Budget – CCSBT Secretariat AU$40,000.

- 1 in-person workshop, 3-day duration
- Attendance of Chair
- Costs of invited experts: e.g., Kyne Krusic-Golub (Fish Ageing Services Pty Ltd, Australia), Jessica Farley (CSIRO Environment)
- Venue (CSIRO Marine Laboratories)
- Standalone, not extra days attached to existing meetings.
- Members to pay their own travel expenses. The workshop will meet the eligibility criteria for Members to apply for Meeting Participation Fund (MPF) support to cover their travel costs.

N. CCSBT Funding Required – CCSBT funds are required