

BACKGROUND FOR AGENDA ITEM VII.c.ii.¹

Topic: Statistical Data Report Card

Each of the five tuna regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) has requirements for statistical data reporting. In particular, they require reporting of data that are essential for stock management decisions. However, many members of tuna RFMOs are not fully complying with their data reporting obligations or are unable to do so. This can negatively affect the quality of the stock assessments and hamper scientific committees' ability to provide meaningful management advice. The Kobe III meeting provides a great opportunity to discuss the merit in recommending that each tuna RFMO require its Secretariat to prepare an annual report on the completeness, accuracy, and timeliness of data submissions using a common reporting format where feasible. Requiring such reports for all of the tuna RFMOs and establishing a generic reporting format would provide a common framework to encourage timely and accurate data submissions across the RFMOs while allowing each tuna RFMO the flexibility to focus on its particular conservation measures. In some tuna RFMOs, such as the IATTC, members do not receive information on which members are not meeting their data submission requirements, including completeness and timeliness. Some organizations also lack guidelines for submitting the required information and do not take compliance actions against members that are failing to meet their obligations. For all these reasons, data are often late, incomplete, or missing.

The report could be as simple as a spreadsheet prepared annually by the appropriate Secretariat that would list the specific data submissions and reporting obligations for catch or other data by species. The completeness, accuracy, and timeliness of the data submitted by each member of the tuna RFMO would be noted. The "data report cards" prepared by the ICCAT Secretariat can serve as an example. A common format across the tuna RFMOs would enable comparison of members' reporting record across organizations. Such a report would also allow the respective compliance bodies to evaluate the data deficiencies by members and recommend appropriate actions, taking into account any explanations and/or plans for corrective action.

In addition, there could also be a recommendation that the Secretariats assess the extent to which missing statistical data have adversely affected the most recent stock assessments and an appraisal of the data deficiencies with respect to formulation of management advice (as is done under ICCAT Recommendation 2005-09). Another useful component of ICCAT Recommendation 2005-09 is the requirement that members provide an explanation on their reporting deficiencies, including the reasons underlying the identified data gaps, capacity challenges, and plans for corrective action.

¹ This background paper was developed to provide information and help frame the discussion on this agenda item. It does not necessarily reflect the position of any delegations participating in Kobe III, and is not meant to limit the discussions on this or any other topic.