



CCSBT-EC/2210/04

Report from the Secretariat

Overview

This report provides a summary of the main activities of the Secretariat since the Twenty Eighth Annual Meeting of the CCSBT in October 2021.

This report also contains one specific matter for consideration by the Extended Commission (EC), which is:

- The process for selection of a new Chair for the ERSWG¹.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to affect the operation of the Secretariat during 2022, but despite this, with the exception of travel for meetings, the Secretariat has conducted most of its work as normal.

The Secretariat has operated a hybrid work environment since before CCSBT 28, with all staff working from home some days/part-days and from the office on other days/part-days. This arrangement has been convenient for staff, whilst also maintaining the Secretariat's flexibility to easily transition to full-time work from home in the event of further COVID-19 related lockdowns.

Organisation of meetings during 2022 has involved substantial additional work from the Secretariat, because all meeting arrangements had to be made for both physical meetings and virtual meetings. In addition, some staff have caught COVID and/or influenza, which has caused delays for some projects.

The cancellation of most of CCSBT's physical meetings during 2022 has resulted in substantial reductions in expenditure this year.

Officials of the CCSBT

The following official positions in the CCSBT were nominated, appointed or held during 2022.

Officer	Name	Date nominated / appointed
Chair – Commission & Extended Commission	Mr Don MacKay	14 March 2022
Vice Chair – Commission & Extended Commission	Mr Ilkang Na	10 August 2022

¹ Ecologically Related Species Working Group.

Officer	Name	Date nominated / appointed
Chair – Finance & Administration Committee (FAC)	Mr Neil Hughes	12 August 2022 ^{*1}
Chair – Compliance Committee (CC)	Mr Frank Meere	16 October 2015 ^{*2}
Chair – SC/ESC	Dr Kevin Stokes	1 November 2017 ^{*3}
Chair – ERSWG	Mr Alexander Morison	22 February 2011 ^{*4}

^{*1} 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.

^{*2} The CC Chair is appointed for a three-year term with the possibility of up to two reappointments. The CC Chair's third term expires at the end of CCSBT 31 during October 2024.

^{*3} The SC/ESC Chair is appointed for a three-year term with the possibility of up to two reappointments. The SC/ESC Chair's second term expires on 1 November 2023.

^{*4} 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. At the conclusion of CCSBT 29, the ERSWG Chair will have completed his last term.

The last term of the ERSWG Chair's appointment finishes at the conclusion of CCSBT 29. The EC should agree on a process to recruit a new Chair. A draft process for the EC's consideration is provided at **Attachment A**.

Consultants to the CCSBT

The Secretariat engaged six consultants to assist the CCSBT in selected scientific and compliance projects and/or meetings during 2022. 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;
- A technical consultant (Dr Simon Hoyle) in relation to development of the CCSBT's CPUE series; and
- A market expert (Dr Shelley Clarke) to support the CCSBT's activities in relation to verification of the catch of SBT through monitoring of markets.

The Secretariat also contracted Dr Hussain Sinan to Chair the Performance Review of the CCSBT.

Secretariat Staff and Office Management

The Secretariat's staff comprised 5 full-time positions and 2 casual, part-time positions during 2022. These were:

- Executive Secretary;
- Deputy Executive Secretary;
- Database Manager;
- Compliance Manager;
- Office Administrator (1 full-time position, but shared by two people working part-time);

- Data Entry Officer (casual, part-time); and
- Compliance Assistant (casual, part-time).

A new Executive Secretary (Mr Dominic Vallières) has been appointed. Mr Vallières will join the Secretariat on 26 September 2022, and he will replace Mr Kennedy as Executive Secretary on 31 October 2022.

One of the part-time Office Administrators (Ms Kozue Loghem) left the Secretariat for an overseas move in June 2022 and was replaced by Ms Chiyuki Inoue.

The Secretariat is in the process of finalising a Letter of Agreement (LoA) with FAO for CCSBT's seabird project, which is to be funded by the FAO-GEF Project "*Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ)*". It is currently expected that the LoA will be signed during September 2022 and the Secretariat will then appoint a part-time Seabird Project Manager to manage this project.

Financial

The preparation of CCSBT's Financial Statements for 2021 was conducted according to schedule. The Financial Statements were reviewed by the CCSBT's auditor, RSM Australia Pty Ltd and distributed to Members in Circular #2022/014. The outcomes of RSM's review identified no items of concern.

A draft revised budget for 2022 and a draft budget for 2023, including indicative budgets for 2024 and 2025 will be provided for the EC's consideration in meeting documents CCSBT-EC/2210/05 and CCSBT-EC/2210/06.

Organisation of CCSBT Meetings

The Secretariat has organised, or is in the process of organising, the following formal CCSBT meetings since CCSBT 28:

Fourteenth Meeting of the Ecologically Related Species Working Group (Online)	21-25 March 2022
Twelfth Operating Model and Management Procedure Technical Meeting (Hobart, Australia – Hybrid meeting)	20-24 June 2022
Twenty Seventh Meeting of the Scientific Committee, incorporating the Extended Scientific Committee (Online)	29 August - 6 September 2022
Seventeenth Meeting of the Compliance Committee (Online)	4-7 October 2022
Twenty Ninth Annual Meeting of the Commission, incorporating the Extended Commission (Online)	10-14 October 2022

The Secretariat also organised two online CPUE web meetings (November 2021, March 2022) and two Scientific Research Program (SRP) working group meeting (May and July 2022). In addition, the Secretariat has organised a meeting of the Technical Compliance Working Group for 3 October 2022. All of these meetings were or will be virtual meetings.

Translation of the 2021 meeting reports into Japanese has been completed and the translated reports have been placed onto the CCSBT web site. In accordance with a decision at CCSBT 26, bound versions of the reports are no longer being produced.

Organisation of meeting venues for 2023 is underway. Quotes have been obtained for three venues for the tentative meeting dates that were agreed intersessionally and notified to Members in Circular #2022/009. However, the actual venues have yet to be chosen.

Meeting	City	Tentative meeting date
SC/ESC 28	To be advised, Republic of Korea	Mon. 28 August to Sat. 2 September 2023
CC 18	To be advised, Republic of Korea	Thu. 5 to Sat. 7 October 2023
CCSBT 30		Mon. 9 to Thu. 12 October 2023

Attendance at meetings with other organisations since CCSBT 28

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Secretariat staff have not attended any physical meetings of other organisations during 2022. However, the Compliance Manager attended (online) the International, Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Network (IMCSN) Business Meeting on 31 May 2022, and a Regional RFB Consultation on the development of regional coordination framework in the Indian Ocean (22 to 24 June 2022) convened by the FAO.

Proposed Attendance at meetings with other organisations between CCSBT 29 and CCSBT 30

It is proposed that the Compliance Manager attend Seventh Global Fisheries Enforcement Training workshop (Halifax, Canada). The Compliance Manager would also attend the Tuna Compliance Network and the Pan Pacific Fisheries Compliance Network meetings which are expected to be held at the same time.

Outsourced Projects

The Secretariat has contracted the following projects for the CCSBT to be conducted during 2022:

- Long term Gene tagging (with CSIRO);
- Close-kin sampling, DNA extraction and sequencing (with CSIRO);
- Close-kin identification and exchange (with CSIRO);
- Sampling and ageing of Indonesian SBT Otoliths (with CSIRO);
- Development of the CPUE series;
- Verification of all Member's Catch through Monitoring of SBT Product Distribution in the Japanese Market; and
- Performance Review of the CCSBT.

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 web site 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 add-hoc and “once-off” intersessional activities of the Secretariat and the EC. Fifty-six Circulars were issued between CCSBT 28 and 12 August 2022.

CCSBT Web site

The web site continues to be an actively updated and actively used information tool for both CCSBT members and the general public. The public side of the CCSBT website was updated immediately after CCSBT 28 to incorporate the results and decisions from the 2021 meetings of the CCSBT. The website is being upgraded to “Drupal 9” during the second half of 2022, with the new website expected to be operational before the end of 2022. The CCSBT’s website provider will provide a complimentary upgrade of the website to Drupal 10 early in 2023.

Participation in the Fisheries Resource Monitoring System (FIRMS)

The CCSBT is a partner in FAO’s FIRMS system. During 2021/22, 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 28; 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 28, this has included:-

- For the CDS:
 - Running CDS data reconciliations, and following up on errors and missing information and forms;
 - Producing 6 monthly and annual CDS reports;
 - 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); and
 - Processing CDS validation details.
- For the eSBT:
 - Copying all available monthly catch report data to the eSBT;
 - Completing an interface allowing SBT monthly catch reports to be viewed and submitted online via the eSBT rather than viewed on the CCSBT website and submitted by email;

- Copying CDS authorised validator information for validators authorised at any time since 1 January 2019 onwards onto the eSBT and completing an audit of the data;
 - Completing an interface allowing Members to enter and update their own authorised CDS validator information directly on-line;
 - Ongoing testing; and
 - Completing version 1.0 of the eSBT manual.
- 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.
 - Managing initial quota allocations and final catch by vessel/company data and associated access permissions.
 - Checking for any submissions in relation to the CCSBT IUU Vessel List Resolution² 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 and development of a manual for the eCDS.
 - Producing papers and reports for the Compliance Committee.
 - Maintaining compliance relationships with relevant bodies and organisations.

CCSBT Catch Reporting (excluding scientific data exchange)

Monthly Catch Reports

Members are now 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 for submitting this information. On receiving the information, the Secretariat has loaded this information to a special section of the private area of the CCSBT web site. 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.

CCSBT Surface Tagging Program

Tag deployment ceased after the 2006/07 season and the Secretariat's involvement in this program now relates only to tag recovery activity. Between 5 and 71 tagged SBT were recaptured each year from 2013 to 2021. The number reported recaptured so far during 2022 was 2 SBT as at 20 July 2022. The number of recaptured tags is expected to decline each year.

² Resolution on Establishing a List of Vessels Presumed to have Carried Out Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Activities For Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT).

Database Developments and Data Exchange

The CCSBT Data CD content and associated documentation was updated and made available to Members for downloading on 13 January 2022. An initial interim update of the Data CD containing information from the 2022 Data Exchange was placed on the private area of the CCSBT website on 16 June 2022, with a subsequent update provided on 28 June 2022.

The Secretariat managed the 2022 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 Eighth annual ERSWG Data Exchange occurred during 2022. Indonesia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, and Taiwan submitted ERS data required for this data exchange, although Japan and Korea provided no Table 2 data for 2021 since they had no observers deployed on SBT vessels. Australia has not yet submitted data due to issues with its database systems, while South Africa did not submit any data for 2021 and has still not provided 2020 data. 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.

In conjunction with Shore Informatics, the Secretariat has continued upgrading its database and has completed an “Authorised Vessel” module that allows Members to provide this information directly through an on-line interface.

Significant work has also been conducted with Shore Informatics on the development of a trial eCDS for the CCSBT. The computer system is largely complete, but it is very complex and requires a great deal of testing and debugging by the Secretariat before it will be available for further testing by Members. A report on progress with development of the eCDS will be provided to the October 2022 meeting of the Compliance Committee.

Draft Process for Recruitment of a new Chair for the CCSBT’s Ecologically Related Species Working Group (ERSWG)

The CCSBT’s [Chairing Arrangements for CCSBT Subsidiary Bodies](#) specifies the following details for the ERSWG Chair:

Responsibility for appointment	Extended Commission appoints the Chair
Appointment term	At least two ERSWG meetings (note meetings are usually held every 18-24 months)
Reappointments	Twice
Independence	The chair shall not be an officer or official of a CCSBT Member government at the time of appointment nor throughout the term of the contract, except where Members reach a consensus to choose an individual, but can be a national of a Member country.

It is proposed that:

- Each Member of the Extended Commission may nominate one independent ERS expert to be the Chair of the ERSWG. Members should ascertain the willingness of their nominee to Chair the ERSWG prior to providing the nomination to the Executive Secretary.
- Each nomination must be provided to the Executive Secretary by 6 January 2023 and must include:
 - a current CV; and
 - a statement of independence in accordance with the above independence criteria together with a declaration of any conflicts of interest.
- The Executive Secretary will circulate the nominations by 9 January 2023.
- Members will provide the Executive Secretary with their order of preference among all nominations by 31 January 2023.
- The Executive Secretary will rank nominations according to Members’ preferences and seek to appoint the top ranked candidate. If that candidate refuses the offer of appointment, the next highest ranked candidate will be appointed (and so on).
- The Secretariat will then advise Members of the appointed candidate.