



CCSBT-EC/2410/04

Report from the Secretariat

Overview

This report provides a summary of the main activities undertaken by the Secretariat since the Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the CCSBT in October 2023.

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

- To agree on an appointment process for the next Chair of the Compliance Committee or to extend the current term beyond the limit defined in the [Chairing Arrangements for Subsidiary Bodies](#)
- Agree to extend the appointment of the Executive Secretary, Mr Dominic Vallières, for a second three-year term.

Officials of the CCSBT

The following official positions in the CCSBT were nominated, appointed or held during 2024.

Officer	Name	Date nominated / appointed
Chair – Extended Commission	Dr Shih-Ming Kao	2 April 2024
Chair – Commission	Prof. Indra Jaya	5 April 2024
Vice Chair – Commission	Mr Mandisile Mqoqi	20 August 2024
Vice Chair – Extended Commission	Prof. Indra Jaya	12 October 2023
Chair – Finance & Administration Committee (FAC)	Mr Neil Hughes	23 August 2024 ¹
Chair – Compliance Committee (CC)	Mr Frank Meere	16 October 2015 ²
Chair – SC/ESC	Dr Kevin Stokes	1 November 2017 ³
Chair – ERSWG	Dr Martin Cryer	8 February 2023 ⁴

CC 19 marks the end of the third term for the current CC Chair, Mr Frank Meere. Mr Meere has reached the term limit under the [Chairing Arrangements for CCSBT Subsidiary Bodies](#) with two previous reappointments. Mr Meere has expressed his willingness to continue in the

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 third and final term expires on 1 November 2026.

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

role should Members agree to extend his appointment. In the absence of such a decision, the Chair will be vacated and the Executive Secretary will begin the recruitment process for Mr Meere's successor.

The Chairing Arrangements provide the following guidance in relation to the process for the selection and appointment of Chairs:

The general process for the selection and appointment of Chairs of Subsidiary bodies is:

- 1. Secretariat confirms process and timing of process by Circular (or at meeting as required)*
- 2. Secretariat calls for nominations by Circular (and advertises as appropriate)*
- 3. Secretariat distributes nominees' applications to members to rank*
- 4. Secretariat tallies votes*
- 5. Successful candidate is notified*
- 6. Members notified of successful candidate*

In addition to this guidance, the Secretariat has developed a more detailed recruitment process (see **Attachment A**) for the consideration of Members.

Consultants to the CCSBT

The Secretariat engaged five consultants to assist the CCSBT in selected scientific projects and/or meetings during 2024. 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.

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.

Contracts are now in place for all Independent Scientific Advisory Panel members, which covers their attendance at 2024 and 2025 meetings.

Secretariat Staff and Office Management

The Secretariat's staff comprised five full-time positions and three casual, part-time positions during 2024. 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);
- Accountant (contracted as required);
- Data Entry Officer (casual, part-time); and
- Compliance Assistant (casual, part-time).

Recruitment of New Compliance Manager

In March, Ms Susie Iball, formally notified the Secretariat that she would be resigning after a long career as CCSBT Compliance Manager. A recruitment process was immediately initiated and a successful candidate identified. Mr Damian Johnson joined the CCSBT Secretariat in May as the new Compliance Manager, which allowed crucial overlap with Ms Iball prior to her departure.

The Compliance Manager plays a critical role in our engagement with Members and we thank Members for their support during the transition.

Renewal of Executive Secretary

The current Executive Secretary, Mr Dominic Vallières, was appointed on 26 September 2022 for an initial three-year term with the possibility of renewal. Mr Vallières has expressed a strong desire to continue serving Members in his role as Executive Secretary and would welcome the opportunity presented by a second term.

Should Members choose not to renew the current appointment, then a recruitment process will need to be initiated immediately in order to allow sufficient time for a new Executive Secretary to take on the role ahead of CCSBT 32.

Relocation of CCSBT Headquarters

The Executive Secretary has been advised that the current location of the CCSBT Headquarters must be vacated at the end of our current lease (late December 2024). The Secretariat will likely be shifting to a new office location in either December or January. Members will be provided with full details of the new Commission Headquarters via Circular once confirmed. These changes should not impact on any of the Secretariat's processes other than a brief period where availability of staff may be limited as we physically relocate to our new premises.

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. Given the current financial constraints and the need to limit increases on Member contributions, additional resourcing is not seen as viable solution and instead the Secretariat continues to focus on finding efficiencies and savings in existing processes.

Finding ways to enhance efficiency within existing resource constraints has been an early focus for the Executive Secretary with an initial emphasis on administrative processes (including last year's update of the Staff Regulations). The focus is now shifting to the professional roles within the Secretariat, with the changeover in Compliance Managers providing an immediate opportunity to review the key functions of that role to ensure that it is delivering maximum value to Members. This is particularly relevant in the context of exploring greater use of Secretariat resources to support Member capacity building (see paper CCSBT-EC/2410/13).

Financial

The preparation of CCSBT's Financial Statements for 2023 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 #2024/17. The outcomes of RSM's review identified no items of concern.

A draft revised budget for 2024 and a draft budget for 2025, including indicative budgets for 2026 and 2027 will be provided for the EC's consideration in meeting documents CCSBT-EC/2410/05 and CCSBT-EC/2410/06.

Organisation of CCSBT Meetings

The Secretariat has organised, or is in the process of organising, the following formal CCSBT meetings since CCSBT 30:

Ecologically Related Species Working Group (Tokyo, Japan)	4 – 7 June 2024
Fourteenth Operating Model and Management Technical Meeting (Seattle, USA)	24 – 28 June 2024
Twenty-Ninth Meeting of the Scientific Committee, incorporating the Extended Scientific Committee (Taipei, Taiwan)	2 - 6 September 2024
Nineteenth Meeting of the Compliance Committee (Taipei, Taiwan)	3 - 5 October 2024
Thirty-First Annual Meeting of the Commission, incorporating the Extended Commission (Taipei, Taiwan)	7 - 10 October 2024

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 for 2025 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 #2024/15.

Meeting	City	Tentative meeting date
SC/ESC 30	Bali, Indonesia	Mon. 25 to Fri. 29 August 2025
CC 20	Bali, Indonesia	Thu. 2 to Sat. 4 October 2025
CCSBT 32		Mon. 6 to Thu. 9 October 2025

The Secretariat would like to note that the ESC 29 (held in Taipei from 2-5 September 2024) recommended that 2025 ESC meeting be reduced to four days (specifically from Tuesday 26 to Friday 29 August 2025).

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 utilised these opportunities in the last year.

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 2023/24:

- 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 add-hoc and “once-off” intersessional activities of the Secretariat and the EC. Forty-four Circulars were issued between CCSBT 30 and 9 September 2024.

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 30 to incorporate the results and decisions from the 2023 meetings of the CCSBT.

Participation in the Fisheries Resource Monitoring System (FIRMS)

The CCSBT is a partner in FAO’s FIRMS system. During 2023/24, 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 30; 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 30, 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); and
 - Processing CDS validation details.
- For the eSBT:
 - Checking and maintaining validator and seal information entered by Members and notifying Members of updates and changes;
 - Completing an interface allowing Members to enter and update their own authorised vessel information directly on-line, 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.
- Checking for any submissions in relation to the CCSBT IUU Vessel List Resolution⁵ 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.
- 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.

⁵ Resolution on Establishing a List of Vessels Presumed to have Carried Out Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Activities For Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT).

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 18 January 2024. An initial interim update of the Data CD containing information from the 2024 Data Exchange was placed on the private area of the CCSBT website on 7 June 2024.

The Secretariat managed the 2024 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 2024. Australia, Indonesia, 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 and monthly catch report data. eSBT has undergone minor maintenance during the year and at this stage no new features are planned for 2025. 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 a trial eCDS for the CCSBT continued in 2023 and 2024 and has undergone testing by seven Members. A report on progress with development of the eCDS will be provided to the October 2024 meeting of the Compliance Committee.

Prepared by the Secretariat

Draft Process for Recruitment of a new Chair for the CCSBT’s Compliance Committee (CC)

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

Responsibility for appointment	Extended Commission appoints the Chair
Appointment term	Three years
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 individual to be the Chair of the CC. Members should ascertain the willingness of their nominee to Chair the CC prior to providing the nomination to the Executive Secretary.
- Each nomination must be provided to the Executive Secretary by 17 January 2025 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 to Members by 22 January 2025.
- Members will provide the Executive Secretary with their order of preference among all nominations by 28 February 2025.
- 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.