



## ITUNNES PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

**Project webpage:** <https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/itunnes/>

### BACKGROUND

In May 2024, AZTI (Spain) in collaboration with, INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT (IRD, France), AGENCIA ESTATAL CONSEJO SUPERIOR DE INVESTIGACIONES CIENTIFICAS (CSIC-IEO, Spain), SECRETARIA REGIONAL DE MAR E PESCA (DRPM-MADEIRA, Madeira), SECRETARIA REGIONAL DO MAR E DAS PESCAS (DRP-AÇORES, Azores), ASSOCIATION DES ORGANISATIONS NATIONALES D'ENTREPRISES DE PECHE DE L'UE (Europêche, Belgium), CENTRE DE RECHERCHES OCÉANOLOGIQUES (CRO, Ivory coast), INTERNATIONAL SEAFOOD SUSTAINABILITY FOUNDATION, INC (ISSF, USA) commenced the **ITUNNES** project, “**Improving tropical TuNa biological knowledge for eNd-usErS**”, funded by the European Union (EUROPEAN CLIMATE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT EXECUTIVE AGENCY (CINEA) **Nº 101157296**).

This is a collaborative project on coordinated European sampling network upon existing national sampling structures to develop an efficient sampling scheme to collect specific biological samples that are non-targeted by the national Data Collection Framework (DCF) programs (Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 – [https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/index_en)). ANABAC, OPAGAC and ORTHONGEL for EUROPECHE will facilitate the collection of biological samples onboard their vessels and information related to the fishing events in which samples have been collected. In addition, the fishing industry will allow the collection of samples in the deep-freezing plants, both in their own and in third-party facilities where they process frozen fish.

The overall aim of the project is to develop the best scientific advice on tropical tuna biology of the three target tropical tuna species (yellowfin – YFT, bigeye– BET, and skipjack – SKJ) to reduce single species and ecosystem models uncertainties, for fostering the implementation of effective management measures for tropical tunas at tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (t-RFMOs) notably at the International Commission for Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) and Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). To achieve this, **ITUNNES** has built an international consortium of research institutions with longstanding experience in biological sampling, processing and modelling in the Indian and Atlantic Oceans and internationally recognized experts in the fields of four key biological axes (i.e., age/growth, reproduction, trophic ecology and population structure). **ITUNNES** ultimately goal is to produce high-quality biological data and parameters, along with products that can be applied by End- Users to ensure that tropical tunas can continue supporting fisheries and livelihoods while maintaining marine ecosystem health.

**The following activities were conducted by partners from September 2024 to January 2025):**

List of deliverables submitted on due time:

- D5.3 Project factsheet (31.05.2024)
- D5.1 Reporting templates (30.06.2024)
- D1.1 Overall sampling strategy (31.08.2024)
- D1.2 Developing sampling protocol (31.08.2024)

Meetings conducted by the Consortium:

- Kick of Meeting (hybrid):
  - AZTI Pasaia (Spain) – 17.06.2024
- Steering committee meeting (online):
  - SC0\_06.05.2024
  - SC1\_04.10.2024
  - SC2\_08.11.2024
  - SC3\_13.12.2024

Sampling conducted by the consortium:

- Sampling process has already been initiated in the canneries/ports in Spain (Galicia) and in Ivory Coast (Abidjan) and in Portugal (Regions of Azores and Madeira).

**Progress report edited on 22/01/2025**

**ITUNNES Project Coordinator**

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