

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

***AD HOC* WORKING GROUP ON ELECTRONIC MONITORING**

4th MEETING

By videoconference

27-28 May 2026

EMWG-04-01

**DISCUSSION PAPER FOR THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE
IATTC AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON ELECTRONIC
MONITORING**

At the 3rd meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Electronic Monitoring in August 2025 the working group discussed the possibility of holding two intersessional meetings in 2026 to further discuss goals and scope, to develop a work plan, to work with the Secretariat on preferred formats for data submissions, to review data and other information submitted to the Secretariat and working group regarding the implementation of EM in the EPO. The Secretariat still has not received any data submissions, but there are other discussions we can have that will help us advance our work.

The purpose of this paper is to:

- Advise of availability of a provisional agenda ([EMWG-04 Provisional Agenda](#)), for consideration ahead of the proposed 4th meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Electronic Monitoring on 27 and 28 May, 2026, in virtual format.
- Provide some background and discussion points for the proposed topics, in order to provide a basis for the Co-Chairs to produce documents and other materials around which we can structure future discussions.

We propose the following substantive topics:

- Review of the results of the 3rd EMWG
- Progress on EM at WCPFC
- Framing of top-level considerations
 - Institutional structure for implementation of EM by IATTC
 - Accreditation, auditing and assurances of EM programs
- EMWG Workplan

Review of the results of the 3rd EMWG

Introduction:

At the 3rd meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Electronic Monitoring in August 2025 ([EMWG 03 Report](#)) the working group heard presentations on EM pilot projects being conducted in Costa Rica and Ecuador. We discussed the fact that the Secretariat had not received any EM data in 2025 in accordance with the standards adopted under Resolution C-24-09 on Provisional Minimum Standards for an EMS. A number of CPCs indicated plans to submit data soon. The co-chairs understand that the Secretariat still has not received any data submissions.

The Co-Chairs reviewed the draft goals and scope for EM in IATTC summarized in “WGEM-01-01: Outcomes-of-the-EMS-workshops” and asked if the CPCs consider them to be appropriate to guide the work of the WGEM. CPCs had no objections to the proposed goals and scope. There were some suggestions to prioritize work on longline coverage in the short term, and to add to the goals an aspiration to replace human observers with EM, but no consensus on these points. Some CPCs expressed a desire to have a work plan.

The group concluded that progress is needed beyond the current voluntary data submission model. It recommended holding two intersessional meetings in 2026 to advance its work subject to the availability of funding for interpretation services. The anticipated focus of these meetings would include review of EM data from the U.S. program relative to the standards established under Resolution C-24-09 (2024) and addressing fisheries with observer coverage gaps where EM could improve data collection.

Progress on EM at WCPFC

To Co-Chairs would like to provide the working group with a brief update on progress toward implementing EM in the WCPFC to afford the WGEM an opportunity to consider how or if the WCPFC discussions might influence how we proceed. The chair of the WCPFC process will join the meeting to provide a brief overview of progress so far, what major elements have been discussed, what the timeline is, etc. The Co-Chairs want the WGEM to consider how or if the WCPFC discussions might influence how we proceed with our work.

Framing of top-level considerations

At the 3rd meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Electronic Monitoring and in a discussion paper ([EMWG-03-01 - Co-Chairs' Discussion Paper](#)) the co-chairs suggested that we discuss topics in the following order:

1. Interim minimum data collection standards and priorities, and financial implications for implementation of interim standards and priorities
2. EMS Objectives and Scope
3. Institutional Structure
4. Management considerations (except goals and scope, and financial considerations)
5. Final data collection standards and priorities
6. Technical standards
7. Financial considerations for standard implementation and final priorities

We have already adopted the interim standards, number 1 on the list, and we had a brief discussion of EMS goals and scope at the third working group meeting. At this stage the Co-Chairs suggest that it would be useful to discuss preferences for institutional structure because this element will have substantial influence over the rest of the work to further develop EM in IATTC.

Institutional structure of implementation of EM by IATTC

Questions:

- The interim minimum standards invite CPCs to initiate national or regional EM programs in order to submit data to the Secretariat. How should a permanent IATTC EM Program be structured?
- Is there more interest in CPC-run national or regional EM programs, or are CPCs interested in having the Secretariat run the program?
- Is there interest in a hybrid approach, analogous to the current large purse seine observer program, in which some observers work for CPC national or regional programs, and some are centrally provided?

The Secretariat could take on a range of roles within these various options, including:

- Administering the program in its entirety, through some mix of internal and third-party services.
- Providing review, auditing and/or assurance functions for CPC national or regional EM programs (initial, and/or periodic post-implementation).
- Holding EM records for potential future audits.

Accreditation, auditing, and assurance of EM programs

- If the Members prefer a model in which CPC national or regional EM programs can satisfy IATTC data requirements, what level of oversight, auditing and assurance is desired to ensure that the EM programs are producing high-quality data?
- Are members interested in generating their own EM data from EM records, or outsourcing that to a third party or the Secretariat?

Initial Approval

- Do we want to require an initial quick review and approval for EM programs to be used to fulfil IATTC data requirements, for example, based on a comparison of EM program descriptions and sample vessel monitoring plans with the EMS standards by the Secretariat?

Accreditation

- Do members desire a thorough EM program review, akin to third party accreditation requirements that exist for the observer programs in some of our peer organizations?

- If so, is there interest in housing this function in the Secretariat or contracting external providers to do the assessments and provide accreditation recommendations to the Commission?

Audit

- Do we desire independent audits to compare reported EM data to EM records, either as a condition for accreditation, or a periodic assurance component for operating EM programs?
- If so, is there interest in housing this function in the Secretariat or contracting external providers to conduct such audits?

EMWG Workplan

- Do we need a work plan and if so, how would the group like that to be structured?
- Would the working group like the Co-Chairs to produce an options paper based on this discussion as a starting point?
- How can the Co-Chairs help the working group members advance this work toward implementing EM in IATTC that can be used to fulfill Commission requirements?

In advance of the meeting, we encourage you to review the following documents:

- [EMWG 03 Report](#)
- [WCPFC Meeting 8 Report](#)
- [WSEMS-01-02-REV-03-Dec-2021 IATTC-Workplan EMS EPO](#)
- [WCPFC-ERandEMWG5-2022-02 WCPFC EM Framework Discussion Paper - final 13 June 2022](#)
- [C-24-09 EMS Interim Minimum Standards](#)