

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FOURTH MEETING

La Jolla, California (USA)
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PROPOSAL SAC-04-PROP A-1

**INITIATIVE TO CREATE A SYSTEM FOR COLLECTING AND
PRESENTING SCIENTIFIC DOCUMENTS OF THE SCIENTIFIC
ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUPS OF
THE INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION**

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Summary

This document contains a proposal to the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) for a system to collect and report scientific documents produced and presented by non-staff or collaborating researchers at the various technical meetings and working groups or before the Scientific Advisory Committee. Documents of these characteristics are currently scattered (or unavailable) among the documents presented and discussed at the meetings for which they were prepared.

Resumen

En este documento se hace una propuesta al Comité Científico Asesor de la Comisión Interamericana del Atún Tropical para dotar a la CIAT-IATTC de un sistema de recopilación y difusión de documentos científicos que son elaborados y presentados, por investigadores ajenos al personal de la Comisión o en colaboración con los mismos, en diferentes reuniones técnicas, grupos de trabajo o al propio Comité Científico Asesor. En el momento actual, los documentos que reúnen estas características se encuentran dispersos (o no disponibles) entre los documentos presentados y discutidos en las diferentes reuniones para los que fueron elaborados.

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

At present, the vast majority of works presented at meetings of the Scientific Advisory Committee (and at IATTC working group meetings) are contributions made by Commission staff, save the occasional document submitted by participants. With the exception of documents drawn up and presented by IATTC staff, these papers have no dissemination channels and distribution is limited to the meeting at which they are submitted, with no subsequent compilation by date or subject matter.

The aim of this proposal is to establish a system for contributing scientific information on aspects of biology, data collection, processing and management, fishing methods, the impact of fishing activities and the administration of species overseen by the Commission. Moreover, it will serve as an incentive to the authors—who are not Commission staff members (but collaborate with them)—and provide a forum for discussion at which to present and analyze the results of their work, followed by publication in an IATTC

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scientific document collection.

Although this proposal was initially made in relation to scientific documents submitted for consideration by the Scientific Advisory Committee, it could easily be adapted to include other meetings of the IATTC working groups and the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Programme (AIDCP), which addresses scientific issues pertaining to the biology, fishery and exploitation of species overseen by the IATTC.

To that end, the IATTC Recommendation C-12-10 on Best Available Science indicates several aspects that this initiative is attempting to promote: encourage scientist participation at technical meetings; improve the collection and submission of data; create, facilitate and support research projects and contribute to the training of scientific researchers (universities, research centres, etc.).

2. CURRENT IATTC PUBLICATIONS

The IATTC currently publishes its results in a series of Bulletins, Stock Assessment reports, Special Reports and Data Reports, as well as in Annual and Quarterly Reports. Commission staff and other scientists who work at IATTC facilities also publish books, chapters in books, papers in outside journals, articles in trade journals and translations of scientific and technical papers. With the exception of Quarterly Reports, IATTC publications are distributed to government agencies, organizations, libraries, research institutions and selected universities. The Quarterly Reports are only available on the Internet, at the IATTC website.

In any case, no specific series of these publications is planned to include scientific documents that are discussed at the Scientific Advisory Committee or at the technical working groups of the Commission or the AIDCP.

Current IATTC publications are as follows (<http://www.iattc.org/PublicationsENG.htm>):

Books, Bulletins, Reports (Annual Reports, Data Reports, Fishery Status Reports, Quarterly Reports, Special Reports and Stock Assessment Reports), Other Published Contributions, Other Publications and Translations.

3. NEW IATTC SCIENTIFIC DOCUMENT COLLECTION

As with other Tuna Commissions, the future IATTC scientific document collection should be the proper place to include various types of scientific documents that provide information on diverse aspects, such as those mentioned below:

1. **National Scientific Report**, which contains information about the fisheries in each country, research undertaken, statistics (figures on catch and fishing effort, number of vessels, fishery modes, total estimations of catch per gear of bycatch for each fishery, etc.). Documents with information about local fisheries (artisanal) and catches (tuna, small tuna, swordfish, bycatch, etc.), statistics (catch and effort) and biological observations.
2. Documents with **biological results** obtained by sampling in port and at fish canning factories for a deeper examination of aspects such as sex ratio per size interval, gonadosomatic index, stomach contents, etc. Results of biological research on local resources of different fisheries/areas/countries. Recovery of former biological and statistical data (papers that have been distributed locally: monographic studies, theses or dissertations, etc.), known as data mining.
3. Documents that contain results obtained in the IATTC zone by laboratories and institutions in the area that have lines of research on species under the jurisdiction of the IATTC: Hawaii, Tahiti, La Paz, Ensenada, Ecuador, Chile, etc.
4. Documents about tuna and the environment, in the eastern Pacific and in other oceans. Documents related to the ecosystems of exploited species, whether target or bycatch (tuna, shark, marine mammals, turtles, seabirds, etc.).

5. Documents that analyze the results of past assessments (fishing methods, fishing area, in the case of purse-seine: fishery on FADs, natural objects, dolphins, etc.). General documents that provide results and hypotheses on species overseen by the IATTC: distribution of different species (e.g., border of bigeye-BET tuna at 150° W), age and growth of tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean and their implications for assessments, natural mortality, etc.
6. Documents that include economic and social aspects on the development of fisheries within the scope of the IATTC.
7. Documents on research projects to be undertaken in the area.
8. Documents on assessment models and their application.
9. Documents comparing biological and population aspects and stock assessment in the eastern Pacific and other oceans.

4. DISCUSSION

Other fishery management commissions have systems to collect this type of literature, which is extremely useful for circulating studies and experiments undertaken every year by the scientists who participate in them.

In the event of this initiative being judged appropriate to equip the IATTC with a system for collecting, editing and publishing scientific documents, such a system should not then be limited to documents presented before the Scientific Advisory Committee; it should be extended to encompass all kinds of studies submitted by external scientists, whether on an individual basis or in conjunction with IATTC staff, before the various scientific working groups of the Commission and the AIDCP.

An important aspect would be to guarantee the integration of this future series into the system of Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA), a component of the Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Information System (ASFIS), composed of four United Nations agency co-sponsors and a network of international and national partners. ASFA is an important base for fishery scientists, since it contains serial publications, books, reports, conference proceedings, translations and limited distribution literature, and could include the IATTC scientific document collection.

In order to equip the Commission with a tool of this kind, certain procedures would be required to cover several aspects, including the following:

- a. To lay down guidelines for the create of the IATTC scientific document collection.
- b. To establish a process by which to present documents (languages, deadlines, etc.).
- c. To discuss the formats of the various documents (cover, summaries, letter font and size, key words, bibliography, etc.), characteristics, numbering and placement of figures, formulas and tables. This type of format should be defined both for paper (if the author or authors so wish) and electronic formats for inclusion in the collection.
- d. To collect and publish the documents submitted (which could be done through the Commission's website, thereby saving on distribution costs).
- e. To produce an annual volume to include all scientific documents submitted throughout the year at the various scientific meetings of the IATTC and the AIDCP.
- f. To plan special volumes on monographic themes (symposia, special research programmes, etc.).
- g. To annually select the documents that, in the opinion of the Scientific Advisory Committee, should be published in peer-reviewed scientific journals (Point 5 of IATTC Recommendation C-12-10 on Best Available Science), in order to extend circulation of the scientific documents presented before the Scientific Advisory Committee and the working groups of the IATTC and

AIDCP among the wider scientific community.

- h. To discuss the criteria and persons responsible for selecting the studies mentioned specifically in point g) and for preparing the editorial rules required to publish the documents, bearing in mind that responsibility for content remains with the authors and not with the IATTC; to keep the proviso that documents by Commission staff can be included in the collection; to establish a deadline after the submission of documents by which the authors must decide on their inclusion or otherwise in the scientific document collection, which task could be undertaken by Commission staff members.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The creation and development of an IATTC scientific document collection is of great interest and should be implemented without further delay. This collection would welcome the participation of scientists from different specializations and countries, thereby encouraging scientific cooperation in the area, the development of new activities and studies on tuna, tuna fisheries and the environment throughout the area covered by the IATTC. Some aspects of certain works may however be limited by the difficulties arising from data exchange between researchers and the Commission, due to strict confidentiality measures currently in force.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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