

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

103RD MEETING

Panama City, Panama

1-5 September 2025

PROPOSAL IATTC-103 M-1

**SUBMITTED BY COSTA RICA, BELIZE, EL SALVADOR,
GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, NICARAGUA AND PANAMA**

**RESOLUTION ON THE PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO FISHERIES MANAGEMENT
(EAFM)**

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM) is one of the main guiding principles of fisheries management. The EAFM considers all the ways a fishery can impact its environment, from biological, ecological, social, and economic perspectives. This approach aims to maintain sustainable production systems in line with Sustainable Development Goal 14 and the principle that healthy oceans produce healthy fisheries.

The EAFM is present in many of the Commission's adopted resolutions and the work of its scientific staff. This approach is frequently referenced during discussions on fisheries management. However, there is no specific framework to guide the definition of EAFM elements and their operationalization under an appropriate standard.

The goal of this proposal is to establish the conditions necessary to fill operational gaps and ensure the proper and timely implementation of the EAFM in IATTC fisheries.

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in Panama City, Panama, on December 1-5, 2025, on the occasion of its 103rd Meeting,

Committed to the objective of the Antigua Convention to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fish stocks covered by the Convention and to give particular consideration to the adoption, as necessary, of conservation and management measures and recommendations for species belonging to the same ecosystem and that are affected by fishing for, or dependent on or associated with, the fish stocks covered by this Convention, with a view to maintaining or restoring populations of such species above levels at which their reproduction may become seriously threatened;

Recognizing the provisions of international law that oblige States to ensure the conservation of living resources and to maintain or restore stocks of harvested species at sustainable levels, and require consideration of an ecosystem approach to the management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks;

Considering the need for cooperation between Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and other instruments, frameworks, and treaties related to fisheries and biodiversity;

Bearing in mind the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the FAO Guidelines on Fisheries Management, Volume Two: The Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, which urge States and RFMOs to adopt a precautionary approach and ecosystem considerations in fisheries management;

Noting the increasing impacts of climate change, pollution, and habitat degradation on marine biodiversity and fisheries productivity;

Recognizing the progress made by the IATTC, including the establishment of the Working Group on Ecosystem and Bycatch, aimed at data collection, stock assessment, and bycatch mitigation, and the need to build on these efforts to incorporate broader ecosystem considerations;

Recalling IATTC Resolutions C-23-10 and C-24-10 on climate change, which recognize the need to address the impacts of climate change on fisheries and to incorporate climate considerations into the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies;

Taking note of the Ecocard work plan, including its objectives to facilitate the operationalization of the EAFM by improving ecosystem-based scientific advice for management through the development and application of meaningful and effective communication tools and products;

Acknowledging that climate change, ocean acidification, and other anthropogenic pressures not related to fishing are altering the distribution and abundance of stocks of tunas and associated species in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO), which should be considered in IATTC resolutions on climate change in conjunction with ecosystem considerations, so that productive fisheries based on resilient resources can be maintained;

Recognizing that implementing an ecosystem approach is essential to ensuring the socioeconomic resilience of fisheries-dependent communities by ensuring that fisheries management not only maintains the health of fish stocks, but also preserves the long-term livelihoods, food security, and well-being of fishers and their communities; and

Desiring to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of tuna stocks and associated ecosystems in the EPO by adopting an ecosystem approach to fisheries management;

Resolves the following:

1. The Commission shall progressively implement an ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM) in the EPO and support the conceptual framework necessary for implementing the EAFM, including social and economic impact elements and indicators to be defined as soon as possible. In 2026, the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group shall review its Terms of Reference and propose any adjustments to the SAC for its assessment and recommendation of possible adjustments to the Commission.
2. When making recommendations pursuant to Article VII.1 of the Antigua Convention, particularly when developing conservation and management measures, the Commission shall consider the minimum elements for the implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM).
3. Within the limits of its budgetary resources, the Commission shall continue to support research and analysis on ecosystem considerations, including studies on the relationships between IATTC fisheries and species, associated species, and ecosystems. This shall include socioeconomic research on fisheries of interest to ensure a comprehensive ecosystem approach.
4. With the support of the staff and relevant subsidiary bodies, the Commission shall develop an operational definition of the EAFM in the context of the IATTC and its components to formalize

and standardize the implementation of the EAFM. The staff shall provide a review of the degree to which these elements have been implemented, including those that have already been part of the Commission's previous work (e.g., bycatch mitigation, ecosystem studies, etc.) and shall develop an EAFM implementation plan for consideration by the Commission.

5. Based on the results and recommendations of this assessment, the IATTC scientific staff is tasked, in collaboration with the relevant subsidiary bodies, with developing an EAFM Implementation Plan.

6. Additionally, the staff shall present the results and recommendations of this assessment to the Commission in 2026.

7. Promote regional cooperation with other Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), particularly the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, as well as other relevant instruments, bodies, legal frameworks, and scientific bodies to harmonize EAFM practices and share best practices.

FUNCTION OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

8. Following analysis by the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group, the SAC shall include, as a permanent item on the agenda, the assessment of the impacts of fishing and other anthropogenic and environmental factors, including climate change, on target and non-target species, and ecosystems.

a) The SAC shall take into account ecosystem considerations that advance ecosystem-based management advice when providing its management advice, including recommendations on minimizing adverse impacts on marine ecosystems and providing information that may assist CPCs in improving their resilience to climate change.

b) To the extent possible, the IATTC scientific staff shall endeavor to incorporate ecosystem considerations into scientific advice for fisheries management. Based on this, the staff shall develop and present recommendations to the Commission on how to integrate these considerations more effectively into existing and new resolutions in the context of the Convention Area.

c) The SAC shall identify knowledge gaps and prioritize research to improve the understanding of ecosystem dynamics, the impacts of climate change, and the socioeconomic implications for fisheries-dependent communities.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMISSION

9. In 2026 and every year thereafter, the Commission shall include ecosystem considerations as an agenda item in its regular meetings, including through recommendations related to ecosystems from its subsidiary bodies, as well as any other considerations related to ecosystem impacts under the Antigua Convention.

10. The Commission shall incorporate ecosystem considerations into the development and adoption of conservation and management measures, whenever possible, ensuring their contribution to the long-term sustainability of fisheries and ecosystems in the OPO.

CAPACITY BUILDING AND COOPERATION

11. The Commission shall promote cooperation and coordination with other RFMOs and relevant international organizations to contribute to an integrated ecosystem approach to fisheries management in all ocean basins.

12. With the Secretariat's support, the Commission shall implement capacity-building programs to help CPCs implement the ecosystem approach and address the impacts of climate change.

13. With the Secretariat's support, the Commission shall collaborate with other tuna RFMOs, the FAO, and other relevant organizations to secure technical and financial support for these initiatives.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

14. The Commission shall review the progress in the implementation of the EAFM annually, including how climate change impacts are being addressed.

15. The Commission shall review this Resolution and its implementation no later than three years after its adoption, and periodically thereafter, to ensure its effectiveness and relevance.

APPLICATION

16. This Resolution shall enter into force on [DATE] and shall remain in force unless it is amended or replaced by the Commission.