

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE
10TH MEETING

Victoria, Canada
02 August 2023

DOCUMENT CAF-10-03

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IATTC REGIONAL OBSERVER
PROGRAM FOR TRANSSHIPMENTS AT SEA**

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1. INTRODUCTION

The IATTC observer program to monitor transshipments at sea by carrier vessels in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) authorized to receive tuna and tuna-like species and sharks from large-scale tuna longline fishing vessels (LSTLFVs) is regulated by Resolution [C-22-03](#).

Paragraph 21 of Resolution C-22-03 establishes that “*Each year, the Director shall present a report on the implementation of this Resolution to the annual meeting of the Commission, which shall review compliance (...).*” For the past three years, the report has been presented selectively in the different Committees of the Commission, with emphasis on the topics and issues specific to those Committees; thus, the Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF) can focus its attention on administrative and financial matters; the Compliance Committee (COR) on aspects related to this issue; and the Scientific Advisory Committee on the operational aspects of the program related to catch data, transshipments, areas, etc. The report that was presented to the SAC meeting in May is available here: [INF-C. Regional observer program for transshipments at sea](#).

In 2022 and 2023, the program was funded by the six IATTC Members that participate in it through their authorized large-scale tuna longline fishing vessels (LSTLFVs): China, Japan, Korea, Panama, Chinese Taipei, and Vanuatu.

With the approval of the participating Members, in 2022 the Secretariat signed a three-year contract with the *Marine Resources Assessment Group* (MRAG) consortium to operate the program during 2023-2025.

2. 2009-2022 BUDGET

Table 1 shows the status of the program budget during 2009-2022.

In 2021, the participants were asked for contributions of US\$ 1,440,000 as approved by the 98th meeting of the IATTC held in October 2021 by videoconference, which, when added to the 2022 surplus of US\$ 354,382.75, results in a total of US\$ 1,794,383 available for 2022. At the end of 2022, invoices were paid to MRAG for a total of US\$ 1,235,102, which allowed for a surplus at the end of 2022, and usable for 2023, of US\$ 559,281.

TABLE 1. Program budget, 2009-2022, in US\$					
	Contributions		Program costs	Surplus/ (deficit)	Accumulated surplus
	Participants	Others			
2009	741,346	-	698,801	42,545	42,545
2010	800,000	4,640 ¹	792,381	12,259	54,804
2011	946,971	6,060 ²	999,731	(46,700)	8,105
2012	1,006,060	6,060 ²	674,241	331,819	339,924
2013	1,000,000	-	771,083	228,917	568,841
2014	500,000	16,635 ³	760,950	(244,315)	324,526
2015	700,000	43,905 ⁴	867,175	(123,270)	201,254
2016	950,000	37,723 ⁴	1,056,479	(68,756)	132,498
2017	1,050,000 ⁵	----	1,159,644	(109,644)	22,854
2018	1,390,000 ⁶	----	1,297,585	92,415	115,269
2019	1,300,000	----	1,043,016	256,984	372,117
2020	1,305,000	----	1,421,486	(116,486)	255,631
2021	1,440,000	----	1,341,248	98,752	354,383
2022	1,440,000	----	1,235,102	204,898	559,281

¹Peru; ²Belize; ³Includes Belize (US\$ 6,060), Indonesia (US\$ 1,485) and Panama (US\$ 9,090); ⁴Panama.
⁵Includes additional contributions totaling US\$ 100,000
⁶Includes additional contributions totaling US\$ 290,000, agreed during 93rd IATTC meeting.

3. 2023 BUDGET

Based on 2022 expenses, during the 100th IATTC meeting in August 2022, held in Phoenix, Arizona, a budget of US\$ 1,440,000 was agreed to finance the program in 2023.

The costs of the program under a three-year contract signed with the MRAG Consortium and approved by the Commission during its 100th meeting are as follows (Table 2). These costs should not increase for the 3 years (2023-2025) of the MRAG contract.

TABLE 2. Costs for the three-year period 2023-2025, in US\$				
Period	Cost per day			
	At sea		Travel	
	≤ 2500 días	> 2500 días		
2020-2022	380	350	371	630
2023-2025	415	380	371	650

Table 3 shows the contributions payable by each participant to finance the 2023 budget and the payments made as of 1 July 2023.

TABLE 3. Contributions 2023, in US\$					
Participant	Total contribution	First instalment (50%); due 15 January	Paid	Second instalment (50%); due 15 June	Paid
China	798,646	399,323	✓	399,323	✓
Chinese Taipei	317,346	158,673	✓	158,672	✓
Japan	50,332	25,166	✓	25,166	✓
Korea	169,235	84,617	✓	84,618	✓
Panama	19,312	9,656	✓	9,656	Pending
Vanuatu	85,130	42,565	✓	42,565	✓
TOTAL	1,440,000	720,000		720,000	

Table 4 shows the program costs in 2022 and 2023 as of 30 June, in US\$.

TABLE 4. Program costs, 2022 and 2023 as of 30 June, in US\$						
Item	2022			2023 (as of 30 June)		
	Unit cost	Units paid	Cost	Unit cost	Units paid	Cost
Days at sea	380	2,650	1,002,500	415	918	380,970
	350*					
	Total with two rates					
Travel days	371	408	151,358	371	131	48,601
Training	630	0	0	630	0	0
Equipment, materials, travel	---		12,177.86	40,385.5		40,385.5
Total (US\$)			1,166, 035. 86			469,957

*In 2022, 2,650 days were charged at a rate of US\$ 380 per day. In January 2023, 150 days were compensated at a rate of US\$ 350 per day, i.e., US\$ 4,500 were compensated, since the different rate had not been applied when exceeding 2,500 days at sea.

Table 5 summarizes the financial status of the program as of 30 June 2023.

TABLE 5. Financial situation of the program, in US\$, 2023	
Item	Amount US\$
1 January – 30 June	
First-semester contributions received	720,000
Second-semester contributions received	710,344
Surplus from previous years	559,281
Subtotal	1,989,625
Program expenditures, as of 30 June	469,957
Balance as of 30 June	1,519,668
Pending contributions 2023	9,656
Expected invoices for July - December	600,000
Balance as of 30 June + pending contributions - expected invoices (6 months remaining)	929,324

Experience shows that, in the last four months of the year, the number of observer and at-sea requests is usually higher than in the earlier months, so it is expected that the expenses for the second half of the year will be higher than those of the first half. It is also important to note that in 2020 and 2021 there were additional costs incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic because observers were sometimes required to stay in hotels at the disembarkation site to quarantine after a trip and then board the vessel. These types of charges are not expected to occur in 2024.

It is important that program participants pay their outstanding contributions totaling US\$ 9,556, as shown in Table 5. Full payment of all required contributions will result in a surplus of about US\$ 929,000 at the end of 2023.

4. 2024 BUDGET

Based on the above estimates and what MRAG has indicated as anticipated expenses for 2024, the projected funding needs for 2024 would be approximately US\$ 1,100,000. If we could count on a surplus of US\$ 900,000 at the end of 2023, we would require approximately US\$ 500,000 as contributions from the six participants of the program. This, plus the accumulated surplus and the expected expenses for 2024, would allow for a reasonable contingency fund of around US\$ 300,000.

5. ITEMS TO BE AGREED

In order to ensure that the Program can continue operating in an uninterrupted and integral manner, it is proposed that the Program participants approve the following:

- Adopt, for 2024, a budget of US\$ 1,100,00 on the understanding that the projections are correct. Only a contribution of US\$ 500,000 would be requested from the participants, allocated according to the agreed formula.
- Maintain a contingency fund of approximately US\$300,000 with the contributions and use of the surplus indicated above.
- Remind and urge participants that have not paid their 2023 contribution to do so as soon as possible or the service for longliners and purse-seiners flying their flag will be interrupted.