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INFORMING THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AIDCP SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

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BACKGROUND

In the fall of 2022, the Director began a program of renewed emphasis on the social media presence of IATTC and AIDCP on the platforms of Facebook, Instagram, X (at that time known as Twitter) and LinkedIn. Following a discussion on the potential of social media for raising awareness of the AIDCP, and the accomplishments that the Parties and their industries have achieved, the 36th Meeting of the Working Group to Promote and Publicize the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System on the need to develop a social media strategy in the context of the AIDCP and directed the Secretariat to describe the goals, objectives, strategies, impact measures, components and concrete actions the Secretariat should develop to make the best use of social media platforms. In this context, the Working Group asked that the following be considered:

- Whether or not to individualize the AIDCP and IATTC social media channels without losing the link between the two management frameworks.

- The usefulness and necessity of creating a specialized area in the Secretariat for social media management.

- The establishment of a group composed of the Parties that will be able to know and recommend the content to be published prior to its approval by the Parties.

- Any other element needed to develop a robust and timely social media strategy.

This paper attempts to address this range of topics in a holistic manner, offers an overview of the current staff efforts regarding IATTC and AIDCP social media, and provides some preliminary budget scenarios for consideration by the Working Group topics. However, readers should bear in mind that the statistics and budget estimates presented are for the IATTC social media accounts, overall, which are also used periodically to post materials relevant to the AIDCP- both educational and informational topics (e.g.

meeting dates). In other words, the Secretariat has not attempted to partition out statistics and costs specific to only AIDCP social media activity.

1. SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY AND GROWTH, 2023-PRESENT

Tables 1 and 2 provide a generalized overview of statistics related to the IATTC's social media accounts for the years 2023 and 2024, respectively. Statistics for X (formerly Twitter) cannot be provided because X does not allow access to this data for free accounts.

Table 1. Social media statistics for IATTC accounts in 2023.

		2023												
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Facebook	No. of followers	907	934	1067	1078	1109	1131	1153	1222	1239	1282	1306	1354	
	Reactions, comments and shares	190	586	273	209	320	172	328	156	240	337	339	190	
	Interaction rate	20.9%	62.7%	25.6%	19.4%	28.9%	15.2%	28.4%	12.8%	19.4%	26.3%	26.0%	14.0%	
	Views	306	397	171	149	241	444	855	521	488	721	809	495	5597
Instagram	No. of followers										718	748	775	
	Reactions, comments and shares										1,200	1,700	675	
	Interaction rate										167.1%	227.3%	87.1%	
	Views										166	208	115	489
LinkedIn	No. of followers							480	511	569	626	676	716	
	Reactions, comments and shares							64	76	95	202	160	81	
	Interaction rate							13.3%	14.9%	16.7%	32.3%	23.7%	11.3%	
	Views							162	292	163	281	302	185	1385

Table 2. Social media statistics for IATTC accounts in the first six months of 2024.

		2024						
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	
Facebook	No. of followers	1373	1414	1428	1461	1525	1547	
	Reactions, comments and shares	466	237	322	145	215	251	
	Interaction rate	33.9%	16.8%	22.5%	9.9%	14.1%	16.2%	
	Views	990	643	688	524	769	569	4183
Instagram	No. of followers	817	845	859	878	896	914	
	Reactions, comments and shares	1,200	690	756	665	834	1700	
	Interaction rate	146.9%	81.7%	88.0%	75.7%	93.1%	186.0%	
	Views	193	126	107	80	208	176	890
LinkedIn	No. of followers	744	774	802	827	883	908	
	Reactions, comments and shares	112	88	92	50	146	74	
	Interaction rate	15.1%	11.4%	11.5%	6.0%	16.5%	8.1%	
	Views	162	182	142	120	217	164	987

With the renewed emphasis on social media, all IATTC social media accounts show significant increases in numbers of followers and in interactions such as likes, shares and comments. Among some of the highlights, the IATTC Facebook account, which has the largest numbers of followers, has grown from 907 followers in January 2023 to 1354 followers as of June 2024, and the number of users following the IATTC LinkedIn account has nearly doubled within the last year.

The current target frequency of social media postings to IATTC accounts approximately 2 posts per week, as IATTC staff believe that this is a reasonable baseline of activity for maintaining a regular presence on social media platforms for Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs) such as IATTC and AIDCP. More frequent posting may occur during certain months. For example, in the weeks immediately before the SAC meetings, annual meetings and associated working group meetings, there is naturally more traffic of the

type relating to announcement and reminders. This target volume of posts has also corresponded very well with the time that IATTC staff working on social media efforts have to allocate to this part of their portfolio; although even at this level of activity, there are still times when staff are working evening hours on social media content.

Over the first 6 months of 2024, this level of social media activity generated, on average, 697 views on Facebook, 148 views on Instagram and 165 views on LinkedIn, for a average total of 1,010 views on social media per month (excluding X). The numbers of interactions (likes, shares/reposts, comments) and the interaction rate among followers can be considered further indication of how compelling or interesting users find posted materials to be. Across the same 6-month period in 2024, the average numbers of interactions per month with IATTC social media posts are 272 for Facebook, 975 for Instagram (with wide variation from 665-1700 per month) and 94 for LinkedIn. One question that IATTC staff cannot answer what portion of followers and traffic represent social media activity and interest of individuals and organizations that actively participate in IATTC and AIDCP processes and meetings, as compared to follows and activity representing civil society more generally, such as those members of the public that are following IATTC accounts for educational or other interests. It is also worth noting that some small amount of the interactions with IATTC social media originates from IATTC staff.

Overall, although the promotion of existence of IATTC social media accounts has been successful and the trends have shown significant growth, the IATTC social media numbers are very modest in the context of the accounts of commercial or private enterprise. However, direct comparison to commercial accounts of for-profit businesses or even the accounts of environmental NGOs may not be appropriate or helpful because in both cases, most organizations invest in social media, at least in part, with an expectation of seeing a monetary return on those investments in terms of purchases or donations. IATTC staff believe that the goals for the accounts of IGOs like IATTC and AIDCP are necessarily different due to the primary objectives of notification and raising awareness regarding meetings, papers, vacancy announcements, and the activities of the Director and staff; along with a proportion of posts that are of a more educational and public awareness nature. Generally speaking, IATTC staff consider that although we can expect IATTC social media accounts to continue to experience modest growth in terms of numbers of followers, the current levels of IATTC social media activity and the resulting magnitude interest and interaction are considering the amount of Commission and AIDCP resources currently allocated to these efforts, which is discussed more, below.

2. RESOURCES, BUDGET, AND CONFIGURATION OF STAFF

The Parties directed the Secretariat to consider, "[t]he usefulness and necessity of creating a specialized area in the Secretariat for social media management." As described in the previous section, under the guidance of the Director, a collection of staff has been developing IATTC and AIDCP social media content with the goal of increasing visibility of the work happening under both agreements, publicizing meetings events and publications, and the productions of small-scale educational posts.

The expansion of social efforts and the expenditures needed to support them are often informed through the development of a social media strategy, but such strategies are typically associated with marketing objectives, taking into account competitors, sales goals, and returns on such investments in the context of business plans, but such considerations are not relevant to IATTC or AIDCP. Additionally, IATTC staff do not currently possess the skills needed to develop advanced social media strategies. Existing staff have become proficient at the development of static social media content that has grown the online presence of the organization and achieved our modest, goals which were identified internally. Absent more formal and detailed indications from IATTC Members and AIDCP Parties regarding expanded goals and objectives or specific content they want to see developed, the elaboration of budget scenarios is challenging.

In this context, staff describe here three simplified budget scenarios. Scenario A is a brief description of the *status quo*. Scenario B, representing the scenario favored by the Director and IATTC staff, represents a modest increase in expenses through promotion of existing staff and a shifting of additional social media responsibilities to this staff member. Scenario C is presented as an example of increased expenses that

could be anticipated in the event that IATTC were to create a program for communications and social media, hiring a dedicated staff member with a specialized background. However, we see this third scenario as something that could be revisited following the conclusion of the current discussion regarding the improvement of the budget process for IATTC and AIDCP and operational rules and guidelines, as well as more general considerations regarding the organizational structure of IATTC programs and staff. We again note that these analyses are for a single social media department providing content for the IATTC social media channels, and including the posting of AIDCP-related materials.

Scenario A: *status quo*

Anticipated additional cost: none

Currently the bulk of the work on the development of social media materials is performed by a team of three staff, drawing on the resources of existing programs. **Table 3** shows their roles and approximate current allocation of work time dedicated to social media efforts. These allocations have shifted over the last 18 months. Initially, the staff in the analyst role assisted more with the technical tasks related to animation, and the editing of video and sounds and policy staff provided greater assistance with the crafting and editing of the messaging for posts. But with the benefit of informal sharing of skills and experience gained over time, the staff serving as Community Manager has gradually assumed more responsibility.

Table 3: IATTC staff currently working on social media	*Time (%)*
Community Manager (Finance and Administration)	50%
Policy Advisor (Policy and Compliance)	10%
Analyst & Technical Expert (Data Collection and Data base)	20%

Of course, this does not represent the totality of work by IATTC staff on social media. Subject matter experts are involved, where appropriate, to help develop content specific to their programs. For example, when creating a series of posts on species of sharks that occur in IATTC fisheries, content is reviewed and improved by staff from the IATTC Ecosystem and Bycatch Program. Similarly, when AIDCP materials are developed, consultation with IATTC Policy staff and the Director himself are necessarily part of that process. But all of this work occurs on a case-by-case basis and in such a way that this work is not readily quantifiable.

Continuation of the *status quo* requires no additional decisions or actions by the Members or Parties and utilizes existing staff to create and maintain a base-line presence for IATTC and AIDCP across four social media platforms. IATTC staff anticipates that the rates of posting and content rates will remain approximately the same as they have been over the last year, with greater volumes of content during times adjacent to the SAC and annual meetings. However, there will also likely be periods of decreased social media activity when the other duties and demands of the pre-existing roles of relevant staff must be given priority. The creation or more content, content that is more complex in terms of development demands, or more consistent and steady posting rates requires either additional allocations of existing staff time (Scenario B) or the hiring of additional professional staff dedicated to communications and social media (Scenario C).

Scenario B: promotion and reallocation

Anticipated additional cost: $20,000

This scenario would still utilize the same set of core, existing IATTC staff, but would elevate the staff currently serving as the Community Manager such that their work would predominantly focus on IATTC and AIDCP social media outputs. **Table 4** shows the anticipated changes in allocation of staff time anticipated under this scenario.

Table 4: Reallocation of IATTC staff time under Scenario B	Time (%)
Community Manager (Finance and Administration)	80%
Policy Advisor (Policy and Compliance)	5%
Analyst & Technical Expert (Data Collection and Data base)	10%

The shifting of staff time under Scenario B would be implemented in conjunction with a promotion of the Finance and Administration staff currently serving as Community Manager for IATTC and AIDCP social media endeavors. This individual was originally hired as administrative support staff in 2019. As is typical for staff that have been with the IATTC for an extended period, over the last 5 years, this individual has continued to take on more responsibility and greater roles, and also with less assistance and oversight, as their skills have expanded and their institutional knowledge regarding IATTC and AIDCP has grown. This growth and expanded responsibility has been particularly evident in the area of social media. This person is ready to assume an even larger role and to dedicate the vast majority of their time to social media efforts. However, the Director considers that such a shift should be accompanied by an increase in pay scale that is more inline with this increased expertise and responsibility. Accordingly, under Scenario B, we anticipate that a promotion from the current pay grade of GS7:1 to GS9:1, and this corresponds to an increased cost of approximately $20,000 per year, including benefits.

By increasing the amount of time this staff dedicates to the role of Community Manager to 80%, this will allow greater focus and priority to be given to the development of social media content, improving both the quality and volume of what is possible, while also accelerating their professional development in this area. At the same time, the corresponding demands on Policy and Data staff will decrease for social media as the Community Manager works more independently, and this will also be positive, as the demands on those staff in other areas continue to expand as well. Therefore, the Director has identified Scenario B as the preferred option for continued operation and improvement of IATTC social media efforts, until such time as a larger and more expensive program might be considered.

Scenario C: hiring new staff and creation of a Social Media Department

Anticipated additional cost: US$ 104,754

The anticipated budget of $104,754 USD for the creation of a Social Media Department under Scenario C (Annex A) includes costs not only for personnel, but also infrastructure, technology, communication, publication, and training. Personnel costs dominate the budget, with a full-time Community Manager's salary of US$ 71,933 annually, supplemented by benefits and retirement contributions, totaling US$ 91,354. Infrastructure and technology expenses amount to US$ 7,400, covering software, tools, licenses, subscriptions, and two computers. Communication and publication costs are estimated at US$ 5,000 for content development and design, while training courses are budgeted at US$ 1,000. Annex B provides additional details regarding some of the resources contained in this budget scenario.

Hiring an expert with formal training would give the Commission staff someone who could provide advanced knowledge and up-to-date strategies in social media management whose attention would be focused exclusively on improving social media presence and the potential for development of more content with advanced design features. Although, as noted previously, IATTC staff are happy with the content currently created and consider that it is suitable for creation and maintenance of a social media presence on behalf of the IATTC Members and ADICP Parties. We also anticipate that the creation of a Department would include budget items for hardware, software and occasional training to help the dedicated expert to stay abreast of current trends and tools.

Although the creation of a Social Media Department would add to the staff someone with advanced knowledge who could dedicate their attention to improving the IATTC and AIDCP social media presence, the Parties should also consider that hiring an individual with strong social media credentials and experience

likely means that they would likely have little knowledge of the IATTC or AIDCP, the objectives of each agreement, or even the concept of RFMOs and IGOs in general. That is, although they could bring new and powerful knowledge and skills, they also probably require significant investments by other staff in terms of orientation and training, and for a significant number of months or years, considerable oversight in terms of crafting message with the appropriate content, nuance and tone for IATTC and AIDCP social media channels. At least at first, it is unlikely that they would be able to write content on their own, and many of those currently engaged in the development of social media content would need to continue that work at some level, indefinitely.

Funding of large, more complex social media projects

Additional cost: will vary by project

As mentioned above, the capacity for IATTC staff to engage in the production of more elaborate, lengthy content is limited- particularly with the current staffing levels and resources, but also probably even in the event that a full-time social media and communications person might eventually be hired. Many organizations contract with external companies to help with the creation of materials that have are intense in terms of production and media resources (e.g. lengthy scripts, conducting and editing of interviews, visual effects, animations, sound editing, etc). In the event that Parties identify larger projects for consideration, IATTC staff can work to develop an estimated budget for such projects, once the Members or Parties have articulated the desired objectives and content envisioned.

3. SHARED OR INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTS

The Secretariat were asked to evaluate, "whether or not to individualize the AIDCP and IATTC social media channels without losing the link between the two management frameworks." Currently, AIDCP-related posts occur via social media accounts that associated in name to the IATTC.

There may be a threshold question as to whether, because IATTC and AIDCP are convened under different instruments, and with different memberships, whether a partitioning for purposes of social media is required. However, as a practical matter, they share a number of resources and are closely related. Most obviously, the IATTC Director and staff provide the Secretariat for the AIDCP, but they are also intertwined in terms of shared costs and a shared purse-seine observer program, and the objectives of the AIDCP relate to and prescribe measures for IATTC purse-seine fisheries. For these reasons and others, the social media program implemented by IATTC staff has thus far used IATTC social media to give promotion to AIDCP topics as well, and we will continue to consider this as viable, absent specific direction by the IATTC Members or AIDCP Parties.

The primary benefit of creating separate social media channels would be to provide a clear political demarcation between the two agreements. Although the Secretariat believes that is it largely possible to generate AIDCP posts that avoid generating any IATTC-specific concerns, having separate accounts on all platforms would avoid such concerns entirely.

Having said that, there are a number of potential drawbacks to having separate sets of accounts for IATTC and AIDCP, mostly of a practical nature. First and most obvious is that the AIDCP accounts would start from zero, and so much of the work that has already been done to increase the visibility of the IATTC accounts would need to be repeated at some cost of staff and resources. Additionally, following the concept that we are targeting 1-2 posts per week to maintain a base level of activity on the IATTC social media accounts, if the same reasoning is applied a new set of AIDCP accounts, then the amount of content and the staff time dedicated to creating it would also need to double, more or less. Also, in terms of the function of informing prospective meeting participants or others with interest about upcoming meetings, in the case of the annual meetings it is convenient to post information about IATTC and ADICP meetings to a single social media channel, rather than having them post to different groups when the meetings adjoin or even sometimes share dates and location.

In summary, although the Secretariat acknowledges an unspecified potential for the AIDCP Parties to promote a post that causes concerns for IATTC Members or vis versa, because of the conveniences of allowing posts from a single set of account, we ask that the Parties consider allow the status quo to persist until such time as it becomes clear that such an arrangement is no longer tenable.

4. SOCIAL MEDIA ADVISORY GROUP

The Parties asked the Secretariat to consider the possibility of "[t]he establishment of a group composed of the Parties that will be able to know and recommend the content to be published prior to its approval by the Parties." As a general matter, the Secretariat welcome and encourages the input of the Parties on matters relevant to social media activities such as policy, priority and messaging, and clear direction from the Parties allows for well-informed execution of the Secretariat's activities. Any general guidance or prioritization of topics, etc., will be very helpful, but that effort might not necessitate the formation of a separate working group, committee, or other entity, but could probably be accomplished through the normal work of this working group and the MOP.

However, a specialized group of interested Parties could have value in the context of the consideration and development of larger, more elaborate and costly products for social media. In the absence of similar action by the Promotion Working Group, such a group might start by identifying 2-3 social media projects/modules that are a priority for development. The Secretariat could assist with the development of budgets for such projects, and if some subsets of such proposals are funded by the Parties, this specialized social media group.

Secretariat staff believe that justification for establishing such a group would only exist in the context of plans to develop a set of more elaborate content discussed above. Because of the limited resources available for such projects, it might make more sense to for the Promotion working group to identify the top 2 or 3 projects they would like to see developed, and then ask the Secretariat to first develop a plan and propose a budget for the highest priority project. This might allow both the Secretariat and the Parties to take stock of the cost of such projects and how many such efforts they might choose to fund on an annual basis. If it then becomes clear that the development of such products is something the Parties will give priority to on an annual basis, the idea of a more social media steering committee could be helpful in order to guide work on larger projects. Alternatively, the Promotion Working Group might also fulfill these functions if it so choses. Although the name of the Working Group refers specifically to promotion of the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System, in function, at times the scope of the work has expanded beyond that specific destination into more general promotion of the work of the AIDCP. For example, in recent years the group has discussed the possibility of helping AMNH renovate their tuna-dolphin diorama to acknowledge the existence of the AIDCP and its role in reducing dolphin mortality in the fishery.

In summary, the Secretariat welcomes the input of the Parties on social media work, regardless of whether such guidance comes from the Parties directly, this Working Group, or an additional group created specifically for this task.

Annex A

Scenario C: Budget of for the creation of a Social Media Department with full-time staff ($104,754 USD)

1. Personnel Costs (Salary Increases)

	Time (%)	Total Cost (USD)
Community Manager (GS-9)	100%	71,933
Benefits	-	19,421
Total		**91,354**

2. Infrastructure and Technology

	Amount	Costo Time (USD)	Costo Total (USD)
Software and tool	4	300	1,200
Licenses and subscriptions	6	200	1,200
Computers	2	2,500	5,000
Total			**7,400**

3. Communication and Publication

	Amount	Cost per unit (USD)	Total Cost (USD)
Content development	1	Estimate	2,500
Design and multimedia	1	Estimate	2,500
Total			**5,000**

4. Training

	Amount	Cost per unit	Costo Total (USD)
Training courses	4	250	1,000
Total			**1,000**

Budget Grand Total

	Total Cost (USD)
Personnel Costs (salary increase)	91,354
Infrastructure and Technology	7,400
Communication and Publication	5,000
Training Courses	1,000
Total	**104,754**

Annex B: Other Budget Items Descriptions

Software:

☐ **Canva**: It offers an intuitive drag-and-drop interface that makes it easy to create professional graphics, even for users with no design experience. Canva is ideal for small businesses and entrepreneurs who need to create eye-catching graphics for social media. It has a free plan, and the Pro plan costs $12.99 per month per person. ([Semrush](#)).

☐ **Adobe Creative Cloud**: It includes professional tools such as Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign, suitable for designers and marketers who require advanced editing and design capabilities. The individual plan costs $54.99 per month. ([Semrush](#)).

☐ **Onlypult**: It allows you to manage multiple social media accounts, schedule and customize posts, and offers hashtag analysis and management. It is useful for social media specialists, bloggers and small businesses. Prices start at $17.50 per month. ([Influencer Marketing Hub](#)).

Licenses and resources:

Chat GPT: ChatGPT, with its ability to generate high-quality content and answer questions in real time, facilitates the creation of engaging and relevant posts for the target audience, enhancing the user experience. Its subscription costs approximately $20 per month or $240 per year.

Deepl: ensures accurate and efficient translations, enabling effective communication with a global audience. Plans range from $7.49 per month to $599 per year.

Getty Images: It offers a wide range of high quality images and videos of marine life. Cost varies depending on the type of subscription and amount of content you need, but UltraPacks start at $175 per download for small images and low-resolution videos, up to $499 per download for large images and high-definition videos. ([Getty Images](#)).

iStock: iStock provides access to marine life photos and videos with flexible subscription options that allow monthly downloads starting at $29 per month, which translates to about $348 per year if the basic plan is chosen. Prices may increase depending on the volume and resolution of the content ([Getty Images](#)).

Pexels: Pexels is an excellent option for those looking for free content, as it offers a large amount of images and videos on marine life under a license that allows a wide and free use, perfect for projects with limited budgets.

QR Code Generator: It offers a basic plan starting at €8.00 per month (approximately $8.67, depending on the exchange rate) when paid annually. This plan includes the creation of two dynamic QR codes and capacity for 10,000 scans. ([QR Code Generator](#)).

Laptop:

5. CUSTOMIZE YOUR 16-INCH MACBOOK PRO - SILVER

- Apple M3 Pro chip with 12-core CPU, 18-core GPU, 16-core Neural Engine
- 18GB unified memory
- 512GB SSD storage
- 16-inch Liquid Retina XDR display[2]
- 140W USB-C Power Adapter
- Three Thunderbolt 4 ports, HDMI port, SDXC card slot, headphone jack, MagSafe 3 port
- Backlit Magic Keyboard with Touch ID - US English

Submarine drone

V-EVO 4K60FPS with robotic arm, QYSEA AI Vision Lock 360° omnidirectional movement underwater ROV with depth-holding, portable robot with control.

Go pro.

Go Pro HERO12 (HERO 12) Black - with 50-piece accessory kit and 2 extra batteries + 64 GB card - Waterproof action camera - 5.3K HDR, 27 MP photos, 1/1.9 inch sensor.

Biological Illustrations:

Incorporating biological illustrations in the social media area is an excellent strategy to enrich the visual and educational content of our platforms. These illustrations will be used to create interactive identification guides and informative posts that will not only capture the attention of our audience, but also encourage deeper learning about biodiversity.