

AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM

10TH MEETING OF THE PARTIES

LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA (USA)
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TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

1. INTRODUCTION

The *Plan of action to enhance the success of the AIDCP* agreed at the 9th Meeting of the Parties requires that, “in accordance with the procedures established in Annex V, paragraph 3, a Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) shall be established soon. The Director, in consultation with the Parties, non-governmental organizations and industry, shall propose members for the SAB, on the basis of their technical expertise, for approval by the Parties by consensus.

The Parties shall explore options for financing the research projects necessary to enhance the success of the Agreement in the context of other budget priorities and cost-benefit analysis.”

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SAB

The Plan of Action provides that the SAB “shall work within the terms of reference already established in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Annex V of the AIDCP and the La Jolla Agreement, plus those decided by the Parties.”

The AIDCP establishes three functions for the SAB. Annex V, which deals with the SAB, provides two terms of reference:

- a. modify current purse-seine technology to make it less likely to cause dolphin mortality; and
- b. seek alternative means of capturing large yellowfin tuna.

Annex III of the AIDCP also provides that the SAB may develop or recommend a calculation standard for Minimum Estimated Abundance for each stock of dolphins, equivalent to the calculation standard of the US National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

The 9th Meeting of the Parties agreed that the SAB should consider a standard of calculation for the annual mortality cap for each stock of dolphins.

Also discussed at the 9th Meeting of the Parties was the matter of the appropriate degree of access by member governments to the Commission’s technical database, and what procedures might be followed if such access were to be allowed. In particular, the NMFS expressed its interest in having access to certain IATTC data regarding tuna/dolphin for research purposes, and explained how procedures could be developed to ensure appropriate handling of the data. The Parties thought that this issue should be linked to more general scientific cooperation.

The 9th Meeting of the Parties also considered the possible program of work for the SAB proposed by the Secretariat in [Document IRP-33-11a](#), namely:

1. Prevalence and significance of cow-calf separation;
2. Stress effects;
3. Review of currently available estimates of abundance for dolphin stocks;
4. Ecosystem effects;
5. Mortality estimates;

6. Life history studies;
7. Stock assessment of coastal spotted dolphins;
8. Population modeling;
9. Developments in gear technology and fishing techniques to improve dolphin release;
10. Capture of mature tunas not in association with dolphins;
11. Any other research the SAB believes is important to enhance the Agreement.

3. PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR A MEETING OF THE SAB

Some preliminary consultations about suitable members for the meeting of the SAB have been carried out. However, given that the SAB is limited to 10 members, of whom no more than two may be from any country, it is evident that they must be chosen with some care, and bearing in mind the agenda of each meeting. The range of issues in the potential terms of reference extend from those requiring expert fishing gear technologists and fishermen, to physiologists or to scientists with expertise in population estimation and modeling. Trying to combine all of those in one meeting may not make the best use of their expertise. After these initial consultations, it appears essential to agree the terms of reference before selecting members.

Accordingly, the Secretariat recommends that the Parties agree on the terms of reference for the SAB, and notes that, if necessary, more than one meeting of the Board will be convened, with different members.