

AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM

53rd MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE AIDCP

August 24, 2026

Lisbon, Portugal

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

AGENDA

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a) Presentation by the Secretariat of the proposed budget	
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(*) Submitted in accordance with paragraphs 11-14 of the Rules of Procedure

ANNEXES

1. List of participants
2. Resolution A-26-01 on an amendment to Annex VIII of the AIDCP
3. Approved recommendations
4. Report of the 42 nd meeting of the Working Group to Promote and Publicize the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System
5. Report of the 77 th meeting of the International Review Panel (IRP)
6. Proposed resolution A-26-02 on the terms of reference for the creation of a support fund for the dissemination of the achievements and actions of the AIDCP.

The 53rd Meeting of the Parties to the AIDCP was held in Lisbon, Portugal, on August 24, 2026, and will resume in a hybrid format in La Jolla, California, on October 26, 2026, to deal solely with item 4 in the agenda (Budget of the AIDCP for 2027)

1. Opening of the meeting

Ms. Yarkelia Vergara, Chair of meeting of the Parties to the AIDCP, began the meeting after verifying that there was the necessary quorum to carry it forward. The delegations of México, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Colombia, Costa Rica, Bolivia, El Salvador, Ecuador, Venezuela, Vanuatu, United States, and the European Union participated in person at the meeting.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The provisional agenda was approved without amendments. The United States delegation announced that under item 7 of the agenda it would address two issues: first, the question of the testimonial participation of observers in administrative and judicial processes at the national level, and second, the electronic data entry system by observers of the AIDCP.

3. Report of the 1st meeting of the ad hoc working group on the financial strengthening of the AIDCP.

The Chair reported on the holding of the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Financial Strengthening of the AIDCP, which took place virtually, 21 to 23 January 2026, with the participation of Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, the United States, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, the European Union, and Venezuela.

The Group examined the results of a consultancy on the accounting, financial, and budgetary instruments, practices, and systems of the AIDCP. The report identified, among other aspects, the need to strengthen the accounting and financial separation between the IATTC and the AIDCP, reduce manual processes, automate budget control and reporting, improve policy and procedure documentation, and strengthen access management and internal controls. There was broad support for moving towards bank accounts, accounting records, and individualized financial statements for the AIDCP, accompanied by an implementation plan that includes costs, staffing needs, training, software, and timeline.

As a main outcome, the Group approved recommendations for the Secretariat to prepare a single, prioritized action plan with deadlines, responsible parties, risks, and estimated costs, covering the separation of the IATTC-AIDCP systems, the restructuring of the finance and accounting unit, the automation of processes and reports, and the possible gradual adoption of a mixed accounting framework. It was also recommended to develop accounting and operational manuals, including the chart of accounts, quality controls, and financial and accounting risk management policies; prepare periodic financial statements supported by full reconciliations; and establish the rotation of independent audit firms every three years.

Likewise, in response to the cyberattacks of 2025 and 2026, the Group requested the Secretariat to submit a written report on the attacks, their effects, costs, recovery, and business continuity measures, as well as future prevention actions. Finally, it was recommended that the Secretariat report quarterly to the Parties on the progress in implementing the recommendations adopted by the Meeting of the Parties.

The recommendations approved by the Meeting of the Parties are reproduced in Annex 3 of this Act.

4. AIDCP Budget for 2027

a) Presentation by the Secretariat of the proposed budget

Ms. Teresa Musano from the IATTC staff described how the budget that had been approved for 2026 was being implemented, and based on this situation, what the Secretariat's proposal was in relation to the budget for 2027. It is proposed to the Meeting of the Parties that it approve a budget for that year in the amount of US\$3,885,186. This amount would be covered primarily by the projected operating income of US\$3,774,822, and the projected budget deficit of US\$110,364 would be covered by the accumulated surplus. It is also proposed to increase the assessment per vessel from US\$16.47 to US\$16.60, as well as to establish a specific contingency fund for the AIDCP for US\$150,000.

It is also recommended to continue, through the Ad Hoc Working Group on Financial Strengthening of the AIDCP and in coordination with the Committee on Administration and Finance of the IATTC, the analysis of a long-term solution for the distribution of the costs of the Onboard Observer Program between both bodies.

b) Discussion and approval of the budget.

Venezuela took the opportunity to report about pending payments of four of its vessels *Cayo Noronky* and *Falcon* will make their payments in the short term, while the vessels *Carmela* and *Don Francesco* plan to carry them out before the end of the year. They indicated that these payments could help to partially alleviate the budget situation.

Regarding the proposal made by the Secretariat concerning the amount of the vessel assessments, the delegation of El Salvador stated that it did not have a mandate to accept, at this stage, an increase in those assessments.

Guatemala stated that it could not approve either the proposed budget or the increase in the amount of the assessments and indicated that this matter should be examined again during the meeting in October. They also noted that they cannot make financial decisions while there is uncertainty about the materialization of the payments announced by Venezuela.

Regarding the issue of the distribution of costs for the onboard observer program between the IATTC and the AIDCP, Guatemala stressed the need to continue discussions between the two entities to define an equitable distribution.

On this subject, the United States indicated that the IATTC is not in a position to increase its contribution to finance the observer program beyond the current 30% and noted that there did not appear to be any willingness by the IATTC Members to increase their contributions, so it should be assumed that this is not a path forward.

Given the impossibility of concluding the discussion on this agenda item, the Meeting of the Parties agreed to resume it on October 26, 2026, in La Jolla, California.

5. Reports from AIDCP promotion working groups and the IRP.

a) Report of the 42nd meeting of the Working Group to Promote and Publicize the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System

Mr. Raúl Cortéz, from El Salvador, in his capacity as Chairman of the Working Group, presented the report of the 42nd meeting (Annex 4). He indicated that the only recommendation adopted was that the Meeting of the Parties to the AIDCP consider adopting a resolution on the terms of reference for the creation of a support fund intended for the dissemination of the activities and achievements of the Agreement.

He noted that, during the meeting, a text prepared by the Secretariat was examined, and the observations received were incorporated. The text is attached (Annex 6) for the Parties to examine and, if they deem it appropriate, adopt the corresponding resolution.

The Meeting of the Parties did not have sufficient time to review the text on the support fund, and its consideration was postponed to a future meeting.

b) Report of the 77th meeting of the International Review Panel (IRP)

Mr. Enrique Espinosa, of Panama, in his capacity as Coordinator of the IRP, presented his report of the 77th meeting (annex 5). He indicated that the following recommendations were approved:

- To refer to the relevant Parties the four cases examined by the Panel. Two cases relate to fishing without dolphin safety panel, another to a set on dolphins without the required backdown process, and the fourth case to bycatch of two dolphins during a set on a floating object by a vessel without an assigned DML.
- To request the scientific staff of the IATTC to analyze alternative mechanisms to the backdown process to release dolphins trapped in the net, with a view to their possible consideration in future management measures.
- To invite the Parties to provide input so that the Secretariat can develop incentives aimed at captains and crews with an outstanding track record of compliance.
- To formally instruct onboard observer program coordinators to require that all observer reports be written under strict criteria of objectivity, impartiality, and factual rigor, prohibiting personal opinions, value judgments, or unverified assertions; also, to strengthen training in technical writing.

6. Proposal review and approval.

The Chair recalled that, since the previous meeting, a proposed resolution on the use of high-intensity, long-range spotlights on board vessels had been presented. This proposal responds to a recommendation from the IRP regarding the requirements set out in Annex VIII of the AIDCP. The proposal maintains the currently planned options (1,000-watt sodium lamps and multi-vapor lamps of at least 1,500 watts) but adds, as an alternative, the use of a floodlight with a light output equal to or greater than 140,000 lumens. The Meeting of the Parties adopted this resolution, the text of which is reproduced in Annex 2 of these Minutes.

7. Other business

a) United States proposal on observer testimony.

The United States submitted a proposed text to clarify that IATTC observers on board may appear as witnesses before the competent authority of the flag State in cases of possible non-compliance, in accordance with applicable national legislation and without prejudice to decisions adopted within the framework of the IATTC. The proposal stipulates that the Secretariat will facilitate, at the request of the flag State, contact between the competent authority and the observer.

The Secretariat noted that it is important to keep in mind that the voluntary nature of the observer's participation must be maintained, the applicable national legislation must be specified, travel and visa costs must be covered by the requesting State, and the Secretariat's role must be limited to facilitating contact. Panama proposed adjusting the reference to voluntary participation to avoid legal issues on the observer's own initiative. Colombia requested that the confidentiality of the processes be expressly included and that it covers both administrative and judicial procedures.

Guatemala pointed out that the text should not be limited to administrative processes, as these can lead to judicial proceedings, and stressed the need to strengthen the preparation of observers so that their testimonies can support compliance procedures. The Secretariat reiterated that the observers have a scientific nature and do not act as inspectors, while Guatemala clarified that the function of an inspector does not imply sanctioning powers, but the objective recording of facts. Given the need to review these aspects, the discussion was deferred to the upcoming session of the Meeting of the Parties in October, and it was agreed that the United States would prepare a revised version of the text considering the comments received.

b) AIDCP Electronic Data Entry System for Observers.

The United States requested an update from the Secretariat on the progress of the needs assessment for implementing an electronic data capture system by observers, an issue raised during the 52nd Meeting of the Parties. Discussion of this issue was deferred until the October meeting.

8. Date and place of next meeting.

The next meeting will take place in October on a date to be determined.

9. Adjournment

The 53rd Meeting of the Parties was adjourned at 6 p.m. Lisbon, Portugal time on August 24, 2026, and will resume in October before its final closure.

Annex 1.

List of participants

53rd MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE AIDCP (MOP-53) / 53ª REUNIÓN DE LAS PARTES DEL AIDCP

Lisbon, Portugal — 24 August 2026 / Lisboa, Portugal — 24 de agosto de 2026 (DRAFT)

ASISTENTES - ATTENDEES	
MIEMBROS - MEMBERS	
BELICE - BELIZE	
DELICE PINKARD* Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit	
BOLIVIA	
LIMBERT CORTEZ* Ministerio de Defensa HUGO ALSINA Ministerio de Defensa	OSCAR MIRANDA Ministerio de Defensa WILLIAN OLIVES Ministerio de Defensa
COLOMBIA	
JOSÉ LUÍS COTES ANGEL* Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores JAVIER GARCÍA Ministerio de Comercio, Industria y Turismo CARMEN LÓPEZ Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible	WILBERTO ANGULO VIVEROS Autoridad Nacional de Acuicultura y Pesca CARLOS RODRIGUEZ Autoridad Nacional de Acuicultura y Pesca GERMÁN FONSECA Programa Nacional de Observadores
COSTA RICA	
JOSÉ MIGUEL CARVAJAL RODRÍGUEZ Instituto Costarricense de Pesca y Acuicultura MEDRANO GONZÁLEZ Instituto Costarricense de Pesca y Acuicultura	ANA VICTORIA PANIAGUA PRADO Instituto Costarricense de Pesca y Acuicultura MAURICIO GONZÁLEZ Cámara Nacional de Pesquería
ECUADOR	
HENRY MERO* Subsecretaría de Recursos Pesqueros LUIS TORRES Fundación Programa de Observadores Pesqueros del Ecuador RAFAEL TRUJILLO Cámara Nacional de Pesquería	LUIGI BENINCASA AZUA Asociación de Atuneros del Ecuador MONICA MALDONADO PEDRO SANTISTEVAN
EL SALVADOR	
JASMIN CARDENAS Autoridad Salvadoreña de Economía Azul (ASEA)	RAÚL EDGARDO CORTEZ COTA Autoridad Salvadoreña de Economía Azul (ASEA)
ESTADOS UNIDOS DE AMÉRICA - UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	
COLIN BRINKMAN* U.S. Department of State AMANDA MUNRO NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region KARIN KIZER U.S. Department of State	PALLAVI JAVOR NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region TYLER LAWSON NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region AMY LUBRANO NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region

LUCY BULKELEY NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region DEREK CAMPBELL NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region	WILLIAM STAHNKE NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region DANIEL STUDDT NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region
GUATEMALA	
BERNAL CHAVARRÍA* Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería	
MÉXICO - MEXICO	
BERNARDINO JESÚS MUÑOZ RÉSENDEZ* Comisión Nacional de Acuacultura y Pesca (CONAPESCA) GUSTAVO LOPEZ Comisión Nacional de Acuacultura y Pesca (CONAPESCA) ISABEL CRISTINA REYES ROBLES Comisión Nacional de Acuacultura y Pesca (CONAPESCA) BERTHA ALICIA SOLER BENITEZ Comisión Nacional de Acuacultura y Pesca (CONAPESCA)	MICHEL DREYFUS Programa Nacional de Observadores MARTHA ELENA BETANCOURT AGUIRRE Fidemar GUILLERMO COMPEÁN Alianza del Pacífico por el Atún Sustentable ALFONSO ROSIÑOL
NICARAGUA	
ROBERTO CHACON RIVAS* Instituto Nicaragüense de la Pesca y Acuicultura	JULIO GUEVARA Instituto Nicaragüense de la Pesca y Acuicultura
PANAMÁ - PANAMA	
YARKELIA VERGARA* Autoridad de los Recursos Acuáticos de Panamá ELIZABETH BETHANCOURT Autoridad de los Recursos Acuáticos de Panamá MARIA SIERRA Autoridad de los Recursos Acuáticos de Panamá	ENRIQUE ESPINOSA Programa Nacional de Observadores MARÍA PATRICIA DÍAZ DE SANTAMARÍA Fundación Internacional de Pesca
PERÚ - PERU	
RICARDO HERBOZO COLQUE* Ministerio de la Producción ANA ALEGRE Ministerio de la Producción	ANTONINO MACEDO Ministerio de la Producción
UNIÓN EUROPEA - EUROPEAN UNION	
FIONA HARFORD* European Commission IGNACIO GRANELL European Commission	MARÍA LOURDES RAMOS ALONSO Instituto Español de Oceanografía
VANUATU	
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VENEZUELA	
PEDRO GUERRA* Fundación para la Pesca Sostenida y Responsable de Túnidos ALVIN DELGADO Fundación para la Pesca Sostenida y Responsable de Túnidos JEIRIS GALICIA Ministerio del Poder Popular de Pesca y Acuicultura	ELENA QUINTERO Ministerio del Poder Popular de Pesca y Acuicultura MANUEL CORREIA Fundación para la Pesca Sostenida y Responsable de Túnidos ABELARDO RIERA Fundación para la Pesca Sostenida y Responsable de Túnidos

SECRETARÍA - SECRETARIAT	
ARNULFO FRANCO, Director MARISOL AGUILAR ALEX AIRES DA SILVA RICARDO BELMONTES DAN CREAM BARBARA CULLINGFORD ROLANDO DENIS MONICA GALVAN CLAUDIA HERNANDEZ JON LOPEZ MARK MAUNDER DIEGO MOJICA TERESA MUSANO	TERESA MUSANO JIMMY OLAYA REYES SANTIAGO OLIVARES BRIANNA PADILLA JORGE PARRAGA JEAN-FRANCOIS PULVENIS DE SÉLIGNY GABY RETANA MARLON ROMAN ARIADNA SOSA ENRIQUE UREÑA BRAD WILEY

***Head of Delegation-Jefe de Delegación**

NOTE: IF YOUR INFORMATION IS INCORRECT, PLEASE LET US KNOW. THANKS.

NOTA: SI SU INFORMACIÓN ES INCORRECTA, POR FAVOR DEJENOS SABER. GRACIAS.

Annex 2.

AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM

53RD MEETING OF THE PARTIES

August 24, 2026

Lisbon, Portugal

RESOLUTION A-26-01

AMENDMENT TO ANNEX VIII OF THE AIDCP

The Parties to the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP)

Recognizing the need to consider relevant technological developments applicable to its provisions and their implementation;

Taking note of the discussion, conclusions, and recommendations on this issue at previous meetings of the International Review Panel (IRP);

They resolve to amend Annex VIII as follows:

“e. Have an operable long-range, high-intensity floodlight with a sodium lamp of at least 1000 watts or a multivapor lamp of at least 1500 watts, **or a high-intensity floodlight capable of output 140,000 lumens or more.**

Annex 3.

Approved recommendations

The Meeting of the Parties

1. To approve a policy of periodic hiring of independent audit firms based on rotation every three years.
2. To encourage the AIDCP Secretariat to use, to the extent possible, its internal human and technological resources in the development of manuals, policies, and procedures resorting to external services only when necessary for support, review, or guidance and subject to due justification and approval by the competent bodies.

Request from the AIDCP Secretary:

3. To consolidate the consultancy's observations and recommendations for evaluating the budgetary and financial instruments, rules, tools, and practices implemented at the AIDCP and to prepare a single **Action Plan** that includes, for each element: priority (high/medium/low), associated risk, corrective actions, responsible parties, timeline, estimated resources or costs required, and if there are implications for both IATTC and AIDCP. These should include, at least, recommendations to:
 - Separate the accounting systems of the AIDCP and the IATTC (as per recommendation “a” on page 8 of the report), including an explicit definition of the level of separation between IATTC–AIDCP (e.g., accounting and operational separation, or separation as fully independent entities) and its implications. Continue providing complete reports and financial statements from the AIDCP, with full independence from the IATTC, without prejudice to the requirement.
 - Restructure the finance and accounting unit (from the penultimate paragraph on page 32 to page 36 of the consultants' report).
 - Automate reports and/or additional activities (as per paragraph 2 on page 11 of the consultants' report), including a possible shift towards a fully automated reporting ecosystem.
 - Implement a mixed accounting framework (US GAAP + IFRS + FASB ASC 958), including an equivalence analysis between the proposed mixed framework and the current system called the "modified box" model, the identification of gaps and modifications needed for a possible transition between both systems, and a roadmap for its phased implementation should its adoption be decided.
 - Conduct a robust risk assessment to analyze current digital vulnerabilities. Compare the effectiveness of reinforcing existing infrastructure versus implementing a modernized, high-security architecture, including all associated capital expenditures.
 - Move from manual accounting workflows to a fully automated reporting ecosystem. This transition should leverage existing IT infrastructure and modern software tools to maximize operational efficiency and data integrity.
4. Prepare accounting manuals that detail the policies and procedures necessary to standardize financial management, pursuant to the provisions of Article XIV, paragraph 3, of the Antigua Convention, to ensure consistency, traceability, and internal control. These instruments must include, among others:
 - A chart of accounts manual to facilitate the understanding of accounting information;
 - Quality control policies; and
 - Financial and accounting risk management policies

5. A projected annual timetable, adjusted monthly, in accordance with the four recommendations on page 19 of the consultant's report, and submit it to the next Meeting of the Parties. Ensure that these periodic financial position statements are based on complete account reconciliations, particularly of accounts receivable and accounts between IATTC and AIDCP and include relevant comprehensive tables and annexes. Furthermore, this information must be made available in advance, in accordance with the rules of procedure, to facilitate its review by the Meeting of the Parties or subsidiary bodies.
6. Provide a brief quarterly progress report on the implementation of the recommendations adopted at the Meeting of the Parties.

Annex 4.

AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM

WORKING GROUP TO PROMOTE AND PUBLICIZE THE AIDCP DOLPHIN SAFE TUNA CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

42ND MEETING

August 24, 2026. Lisbon, Portugal

MEETING REPORT

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Follow up of the last meeting recommendations
4. Actions to promote AIDCP dolphin safe tuna
5. Recommendations to the Meeting of the Parties
6. Date and place of next meeting
7. Adjournment

ANNEXES

- 1) List of participants
- 2) Proposed resolution to create a support fund for the dissemination of AIDCP's activities and achievements.

The 42nd meeting of the Working Group to Promote and Publicize the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System was held in a hybrid format in Lisbon, Portugal, starting at 9:20 a.m. on August 24, 2026.

1. Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened by the Chairman of this Working Group, Mr. Raúl Cortez, from El Salvador, who thanked the IATTC Secretariat for coordinating the event, the European Union for its hospitality, especially Portugal, and thanked the participants for their attendance to the Working Group meeting.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The provisional agenda was approved without amendments.

3. Following up of the last meeting recommendations

The Secretariat presented and explained document DSP-42-01, which contains the draft resolution for the creation and operation of the *“Draft terms of reference for the establishment and operation of a fund for disseminating the AIDCP and its achievements”*. This document was prepared by the Secretariat in

accordance with the mandate of the 41st meeting and incorporated the comments and observations sent by the United States delegation during the intersessional consultation process.

Mr. Ricardo Belmontes, from the Secretariat, explained the content of the document, highlighting that the Fund will aim to finance and provide strategic support to activities promoting, disseminating, educating, and training on the measures applied in the tuna purse seine fishery for the protection of dolphins and marine conservation within the framework of the AIDCP. Activities may include awareness campaigns, educational and communication materials, accessible dissemination of scientific results, and good fishing practices, as well as workshops aimed at crews, observers, and authorities. Its operation will be based on the principles of conservation, transparency, accountability, participation, and financial sustainability.

The AIDCP Secretariat will manage the Fund in a trust, while the Working Group will prepare an Annual Work Plan and budget for approval by the Meeting of the Parties. The resources may come from voluntary contributions from the member governments of the AIDCP and the IATTC, the tuna industry, multilateral organizations, NGOs, and private foundations. The Secretariat will report periodically on the sources and use of resources, as well as on the results obtained. The Terms of Reference will have an initial validity of three years, subject to periodic review.

Guatemala requested to modify the provisions relating to the participation of environmental organizations. They proposed removing the reference to these organizations as beneficiaries of the capacity-building objective, so that it is limited to fishermen and competent authorities directly linked to management actions. Likewise, regarding the scope of the Fund, they asked to review and clarify the wording on the activities that could be financed, such as workshops, conferences, seminars, educational modules, and educational actions in schools and in tuna marketing centers.

Regarding the operating principles, Guatemala proposed to eliminate or revise the wording that provides for incorporating suggestions from donor agents, industry, Parties, and environmental organizations in the definition and design of dissemination and promotion activities, noting that these functions should be channeled mainly through the AIDCP Working Group on Promotion. The delegation indicated that it would submit its specific proposals in writing for consideration, an initiative that was welcomed and appreciated by the Chair.

The United States proposed that the document with Guatemala's comments be analyzed when the Promotion Group's report is released at the AIDCP Meeting of the Parties for its eventual approval. This proposal, along with the comments received during the meeting, is presented as Annex 2.

4. Actions to promote AIDCP dolphin safe tuna

At this point, there were no new suggestions for actions to promote AIDCP dolphin-safe tuna.

5. Recommendations to the AIDCP Meeting of the Parties.

That the meeting of the Parties to the AIDCP be informed of, and eventually approve, the resolution to create a support fund for the dissemination of AIDCP's activities and achievements.

6. Date and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Working Group will be held on the dates agreed upon for AIDCP meetings in 2026.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on August 24, 2026, at 09:47 am.

Annex 5.

AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM (AIDCP)

77TH MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL REVIEW PANEL

Lisbon, Portugal

August 24, 2026

MEETING REPORT

	Documents
1. Opening of the meeting	
2. Adoption of the agenda	
3. Review of Dolphin Mortality Limits for 2025 and 2026	IRP-77-01
4. Review of the AIDCP List of Qualified Captains	IRP-77-02
5. Review of cases with possible infractions (observer data)	IRP-77-03
6. Review of actions by the Parties regarding possible infractions reported by the IRP:	IRP-77-04
a) Actions taken since the report at the 76 th meeting	
b) Status review of special cases	
7. Report of the Permanent Working Group on Tuna Tracking	
8. Other business	
9. Recommendations to the Meeting of the Parties	
10. Date and place of next meeting	
11. Adjournment	

ANNEXES

1. List of participants

1. Opening of the meeting

The 77th meeting of the International Review Panel (IRP) was held on August 26, 2024, in Panama City, Panama. It started at 09:58 local time.

M.Sc. Yarkelia Vergara, Chair of the AIDCP, gave the floor to Mr. Enrique Espinosa as Coordinator of the IRP to chair this meeting.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without modifications

3. Review of Dolphin Mortality Limits for 2025 and 2026

Biologist Enrique Ureña from the Secretariat presented document IRP-77-01. He reported on DML utilization and dolphin mortality from 2025 and 2026 until July 29, 2026. In 2025, 107 full-year limits were allocated: 89 used in the first quarter, 2 waived, 13 approved exemptions, 3 lost DMLs for not being

used before April 1, 4 limits allocated by the Director's reserve for the second half (15 dolphins each), where 1 was not used before October 1.

In 2025, the fleet made 11,175 sets on tuna associated with dolphins, with 942 dead dolphins, with a mortality rate per set of 0.08, and an average mortality rate of 9.5 per vessel. Regarding the distribution of cumulative mortality, 27 vessels did NOT register dolphin mortality, 17 vessels had a cumulative mortality between 1-5 dolphins, 14 vessels between 6-10 dolphins, 15 vessels between 11-15 dolphins, 16 vessels between 16-20 dolphins, and 10 vessels between 21-50 dolphins.

In relation to DML utilization, 103 full-year limits were allocated: 79 were used in the first quarter, 1 waived, 21 approved exemptions, 3 lost for not being used before April 1, 6 limits allocated by the Director's reserve for the second half (10 dolphins each). Up to the date mentioned, the fleet made 7,082 sets on tuna associated with dolphins, with 585 dead dolphins, a mortality rate of 0.08 per set, and an average mortality rate of 6.6 per vessel.

Regarding the distribution of accumulated mortality, 20 vessels did NOT register dolphin mortality, 23 vessels had an accumulated mortality for this year between 1-5 dolphins, 22 vessels between 6-10 dolphins, 13 vessels between 11-15 dolphins, 10 vessels between 16-20 dolphins, and 1 vessel between 21-25 dolphins.

4. Review of the AIDCP List of Qualified Captains

The secretariat presented document IRP 77-02, which indicates that during the period from October 16, 2025, to July 29, 2026, 10 applications were received to add captains to the list of qualified captains who complied with all the requirements, no captain was eliminated due to infractions nor were there reinstatements to the list.

5. Review of cases with possible infractions (observer data)

The secretariat presented document IRP 76-04 with the possible cases that require analysis by the Panel. It is reported that during the period since the 76.^a IRP meeting, the Secretariat has examined 762 fishing trips and identified four possible cases of non-compliance that require the Panel's consideration and guidance: two cases of fishing without Dolphin Safety Panel (DSP), one case of a set without the required backdown process, and one case of dolphin entrapment.

The cases 20260460 and 20260538 correspond to cases for fishing without DSP, after the removal of the panel or while it was under repair; in both cases, the vessels concentrated on schools of fish not associated with dolphins. The case 20260185 refers to a set involving dolphins without the required backdown process, although the captain indicated that he would release the bow head to facilitate the dolphins' exit. Finally, the case 20251039 involved a vessel without an assigned DML that, during a set over a floating object, accidentally caught two dolphins, which were later seen dead in the sack.

After reviewing these cases, the Panel decided to send them to each of the relevant Parties for investigation.

6. Review of actions by the Parties regarding possible violations reported by the IRP.

The Secretariat presented document IRP-77-04, which states that there were no cases to report regarding the previous meeting, but reported on some cases under investigation, as well as the latest responses from the corresponding CPCs.

7. Report of the Permanent Working Group on Tuna Tracking

The chair of the Permanent Working Group on Tuna Tracking, Jeiris Galicia, presented her report to the panel, indicating that the agenda was adopted without objection, and the information from document *T55-01* was presented with the update of the delivery of copies and originals of the TTF document showing a high level of compliance.

8. Other business.

No other matters were added to this meeting.

9. Recommendations to the Meeting of the Parties.

The IRP made the following recommendations to the AIDCP Meeting of the Parties:

- The 4 cases reviewed at this meeting and described in point 5 of this report were sent to the relevant Parties.
- Consider requesting the scientific staff of the IATTC to prepare an analysis of additional and alternative mechanisms to the backdown maneuver for the release of dolphins trapped in the net at the time of closing the purse seine, at levels of safety sufficient to consider them as operations that safeguard the integrity and prevent the mortality of dolphins, so that it can be considered in a possible update of the relevant management measures.
- Consider urging the Parties to submit to the Secretariat inputs for the development of an incentive system for captains and crews of vessels with a record of outstanding performance and no record of violations, with a view to improving compliance with the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program, in accordance with the purpose agreed in resolution A-99-01.
- That the managers and coordinators of onboard observer programs (both IATTC and national programs) be formally instructed to require that all reports issued by observer personnel be written under strict criteria of objectivity, impartiality, and factual rigor, categorically prohibiting the inclusion of personal opinions, value judgments, or assertions based on unverified assumptions or inferences; at the same time, the IATTC Secretariat is requested to continuously strengthen training programs for observers in technical writing and data reporting, reaffirming that the essential function of observers is to accurately and impartially record the facts directly witnessed, thus guaranteeing the technical soundness and credibility of the inputs used for fishery management and compliance assessment.

10. Date and place of next meeting.

The date and place of the next meeting will be announced by the Secretariat in the context of the upcoming meetings in October.

11. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m. Lisbon, Portugal, time on August 24, 2026.

Annex 6.

INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE AIDCP

**Lisbon, Portugal
August 2026**

PROPOSED RESOLUTION A-26-02

CREATION OF A FUND FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACTIONS DEVELOPED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM

The Parties to the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP)

Reiterating their commitment to promoting the achievement of AIDCP's goals and objectives through their effective implementation;

Remembering that in 2001, the Meeting of the Parties agreed on procedures for AIDCP Dolphin Safe tuna certification, which provide, as appropriate and in accordance with applicable national legislation, the disclosure of information on the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification, as well as the promotion of AIDCP's objectives and an accurate public understanding of its dolphin protection measures;

Recalling also that, in these proceedings, the Meeting of the Parties agreed to disseminate objective information, among others, to importers, fishing organizations, and non-governmental organizations, using their own capacities in their internal and external markets to support an accurate public perception of the AIDCP and its objectives;

Highlighting that the work carried out within the framework of the AIDCP has been successful thanks to the efforts of governments, vessel owners, fishermen, and non-governmental organizations involved, which has made it possible to achieve a reduction in dolphin bycatch in the tuna purse seine fishery in compliance with the objective of Article II of the AIDCP to progressively reduce dolphin bycatch mortality to levels close to zero;

Recognizing that the AIDCP has been deserving of international recognition for its outstanding achievements in reducing dolphin bycatch, including the Margarita Lizárraga Medal for responsible fishing, awarded by the FAO in 2005;

Whereas, to give due publicity to the achievements and work carried out within the framework of the AIDCP, the Parties decided to create a Working Group to promote and publicize the Dolphin Safe AIDCP certification system, which has been operating since 2003;

Taking note that the 51st Meeting of the Parties adopted the recommendation to instruct the Working Group “to entrust the Secretariat to coordinate a consultation process among the Parties during the intersessional period to formulate a proposal on the Terms of Reference for the Special Fund to promote and publicize the AIDCP, to be presented at the next AIDCP meeting in 2026.

Having reviewed this proposal,

They agree:

To create a Fund to support the development and dissemination of materials agreed upon by the Meeting of the Parties, to promote awareness of the AIDCP and the achievements attained within the framework of the Agreement, which will be governed and administered in accordance with the following Terms of Reference:

1. General objective of the Fund.

Provide financial support to promotion, dissemination, and education activities on dolphin protection actions implemented in the tuna purse seine fishery, in accordance with the measures of the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP).

2. Specific objectives.

- To finance communication and awareness campaigns on the importance and scope of the AIDCP in the protection of dolphins, as well as on the obligations arising from the Agreement.
- To disseminate to the public, in accessible language, the scientific, technical, and management results derived from the implementation of the Agreement (bycatch reports, good fishing practices, regulatory improvements, research for stock assessment, etc.).
- To strengthen the capacities of key actors (fishers, competent authorities, among others) in terms of good practices and compliance with the Agreement, through dissemination materials and activities.

3. Scope of the Fund

The Fund will be able to finance:

- Development and production of outreach materials (brochures, infographics, videos, podcasts, radio segments, websites, social media content).
- Mass and segmented communication campaigns (in traditional and digital media).
- Workshops, conferences, seminars, educational modules and activities: the activities and achievements of the AIDCP.
- Development of content for the ongoing training of onboard observers, crews, and other relevant actors.
- Other actions consistent with the objectives of paragraph 1 of this Resolution that may be approved by the Parties to the AIDCP.

4. Operating principles

- Conservation approach: All activities must contribute, directly or indirectly, to improving the dissemination of the AIDCP and its knowledge by the public, as well as to the fulfillment of the AIDCP's objectives. All outreach activities that contribute, directly or indirectly, to improving public awareness of the AIDCP, including how its objectives, work, and achievements contribute to dolphin conservation.
- Transparency and accountability: Periodic publication, preferably annually and during the meetings of the AIDCP Working Group on Promotion, on financial information and results of the funded projects.

- Participation Definition and design of dissemination and promotion activities through the AIDCP Promotion Working Group, suggestions from donor agencies, the industry, environmental organizations, and the Parties to the AIDCP.
- Financial sustainability: Actively seeking co-financing and partnerships that allow for the continuity of actions beyond the initial resources of the Fund.

5. Fund Governance

The Fund will be under the leadership of the AIDCP Secretariat, which will act in accordance with the mandate given to it by the AIDCP Meeting of the Parties.

The AIDCP Working Group on Promotion shall submit to the Parties an annual work plan, including the proposed projects and their respective budgets, for approval by the AIDCP. The Meeting of the Parties shall review and, if necessary, approve the AIDCP promotion work plan in accordance with the resources available in the Fund and shall also examine the reports submitted by the AIDCP Secretariat on:

- Resource management (receiving contributions, fiduciary administration, payments).
- Administrative and financial monitoring of projects.
- Achievements made using the Fund.

6. Sources of financing

The financial resources that will make up the Fund will consist of:

- Voluntary contributions from national governments.
- Voluntary contributions from the tuna industry (vessel owners, processors, marketers).
- Voluntary contributions from multilateral organizations, environmental organizations, and private foundations.
- Contributions generated through other financial mechanisms agreed by the Parties to the AIDCP.

7. Term of validity and review of the terms of reference (ToR).

- These Terms of Reference will be valid for three years from their formal adoption by the Parties to the AIDCP.
- They must be reviewed and, where appropriate, extended or updated at least every three years or sooner if the AIDCP regulatory framework, applicable national provisions, or fishery conditions are substantially modified.