

**AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM**  
**37<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE PARTIES**

San Diego, California, USA  
August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**AGENDA**

	Documents
1. Opening of the meeting	
2. Election of Chairman	
3. Adoption of the agenda	
4. Approval of the minutes of the 36 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties	
5. Secretariat's preliminary report on the IDCP	
6. USA proposals on safety of observers at sea	
7. Mexico's proposal to update Resolution A-13-01 on vessel assessments and financing	
8. AIDCP budget	MOP-37-01
9. Design of a survey for eastern tropical Pacific dolphin stocks	
10. Unfunded research projects	
11. Report of the 28 <sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group to Promote and Publicize the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System	
12. Report of the 63 <sup>rd</sup> meeting of the International Review Panel	
13. Other business	
14. Place and date of next meeting	
15. Adjournment	

**APPENDICES**

1. List of attendees
2. Resolution A-18-01 on vessel assessments and financing
3. Report of the Chair of the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group to Promote and Publicize the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System
4. Report of the Presider of the 63<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the International Review Panel

The 37<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) was held in San Diego, California, USA on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

**1. Opening of the meeting**

The meeting was opened by Dr. Guillermo Compeán, Director of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), which provides the Secretariat for the AIDCP.

**2. Election of Chairman**

Mr. Alvin Delgado, from Venezuela, was elected Chairman of the meeting.

### **3. Adoption of the agenda**

The provisional agenda was approved with the addition of the following items:

- Two proposals from the United States on safety of observers at sea.
- Proposal from Mexico to update Resolution A-13-01 on vessel assessments and financing.
- Design of a survey for eastern tropical Pacific dolphin stocks.
- Unfunded research projects.

### **4. Approval of the minutes of the 36<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties**

The minutes of the 36<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties were approved without changes

### **5. Secretariat's preliminary report on the IDCP**

Dr. Martin Hall, from the Secretariat, presented the preliminary report on the Program's operation in 2017.

During that year, 8,863 sets on dolphins were recorded with an average mortality per set of 0.08, which is slightly higher than the mortality recorded in 2016 (0.06). In accordance with the requirements of the AIDCP, 100% of the trips made by large purse-seine vessels have been sampled. Dolphin Mortality Limits (DMLs) of 49 dolphins were allocated to 100 vessels. One vessel exceeded its DML, but the Party reallocated an additional DML of 18 dolphins.

There were no comments on this preliminary report.

### **6. USA proposals on safety of observers at sea**

The United States presented proposals [A-1](#) and [A-2](#) to improve the safety of observers at sea. The first one involves providing observers with an independent communication device to allow direct contact between the observer and his corresponding program, and a personal beacon that would transmit a signal if the observer fell into the water. The second proposal is an action plan to be followed by the vessels and authorities of the Parties in case of an emergency involving an observer at sea.

The Parties agreed that safety should not only be improved for observers but also for the whole crew at sea. They reiterated that the work done by observers is fundamental for the operation and success of the dolphin conservation program and the data collection on the tuna resource, as well as for monitoring the implementation of conservation and management measures of the IATTC.

There was no consensus regarding the funding for the equipment and the annual payment for the communication service. Two delegations expressed that they would not agree to purchase the equipment with the accumulated surplus of the AIDCP, while others expressed that they could not approve increases to the budget to cover these costs.

Some delegations mentioned that the AIDCP observer program is a single program, so one should not speak of "national" and "IATTC" programs, and that their funding should be addressed jointly. The Chairman invited the Parties to work to obtain the necessary funding and make progress on this proposal.

The United States offered US\$ 100,000 for this purpose and mentioned that they are seeking external funding. Furthermore, they highlighted that proposal A2, the emergency action plan, did not generate substantial debate and there were no objections for its approval.

A discussion took place over whether the equipment should be kept aboard the vessels between trips for practicality reasons, or under the custody of the observer program to be able to verify its performance. No decision was made in this regard.

## **7. Mexico's proposal to update Resolution A-13-01 on vessel assessments and financing**

Mexico presented its proposal to update Resolution A-13-01 on vessel assessments and financing, mentioning that it seeks to eliminate paragraphs from the current resolution that have become obsolete—like the request for an extraordinary assessment for 2014—in addition to recording in a single document various situations of contributions to the observer program that, while already approved, are scattered across meeting minutes and other resolutions.

After having reviewed the changes to the text of this document, the Parties approved the proposal as Resolution A-18-01 (Appendix 2).

## **8. AIDCP budget**

Mrs. Nora Rosa, from the Secretariat, presented [Document MOP-37-01 AIDCP Budget](#). She pointed out that for 2019, the Secretariat recommends a budget of US\$ 3,743,398, from which the IATTC would contribute 30% (US\$ 1,008,029); the remainder (US\$ 2,735,369), considering an anticipated well volume of AIDCP vessels active in 2019 of 165,000 m<sup>3</sup>, would imply a vessel assessment rate of US\$ 16.58/m<sup>3</sup>.

Mr. Brad Wiley, from the Secretariat, gave more details about the three items that imply significant increases in the budget: safety equipment for observers, observer salaries and observer training.

The budget includes the purchase of the devices considered in proposal A1 from the United States for all AIDCP observers, including those from national programs. The amount to be covered in 2019 is around US\$ 107,750, after having considered the US\$ 100,000 contribution from the United States; the subsequent annual cost for the communication service would be approximately US\$ 60,000.

The observer daily pay rates will increase by US\$ 10, to US\$ 55-65, beginning in 2019. In 2017, IATTC observers spent 25,369 days at sea. Assuming a similar level of activity in 2019, this would increase observer compensation costs by US\$ 284,500, including taxes and social security.

The Secretariat foresees additional training courses in 2019 to address observer shortage, as well as to train IATTC observers for trips that include fishing activities in the WCPFC area. An additional cost of US\$ 17,000 is estimated for 2019.

The subject was not settled, mainly because there was no agreement on whether the cost of the observer safety equipment should come from the AIDCP budget, and because it was not clear if the budget implied an increase of the current vessel assessment rate of 14.95/m<sup>3</sup>. It was decided that the budget would be reviewed again during the Meeting of the Parties in October 2018.

## **9. Design of a survey for eastern tropical Pacific dolphin stocks**

La Dr. Cornelia S. Oedekoven<sup>1</sup>, who was hired to design the survey, presented [Document MOP-37-02](#). Two possible objectives are considered for the survey: 1) estimate relative abundance comparable with past NMFS surveys; and 2) estimate absolute abundance of the priority stocks.

The Parties made general comments on the importance of this survey and mentioned that it is fundamental for the work of the AIDCP and that it would be even more useful to conduct three or four consecutive surveys instead of one in order to obtain more accurate estimates. It was recalled that, in the Pacific, the hurricane season goes from July to September, which should be taken into account.

At the Parties' request, the Director recalled that the cost of the design of the survey was covered with contributions from the Mexican industry and, as of that moment, no AIDCP money had been used.

## **10. Unfunded research projects**

Dr. Alexandre Aires-da-Silva, Coordinator of Scientific Research of the IATTC, presented [Document](#)

---

<sup>1</sup> Centre for Research into Ecological and Environmental Modelling, University of St Andrews, United Kingdom.

[MOP-37-03 on unfunded research projects](#). He pointed out that it contemplated the possibility of using the AIDCP surplus of US\$ 1.75 million in four research projects:

Cost of proposed research projects, in US\$		
1.	a. Full at-sea abundance survey (includes trial survey)	5,681,670 – 17,538,580
	b. Trial survey only	1,401,480 - 4,333,820
2.	Cow-calf separation	340,000
3.	Stock assessment	238,000
4.	Movement and tag loss	430,000

Mexico pointed out that the first project is the most important one and that it should be prioritized over the implementation of all the other projects presented since the resources are limited. Mexico stressed that knowing the abundance of dolphins in the EPO is not only an attribution of the AIDCP but also of the IATTC because it is responsible for studying tunas and their ecosystem. Therefore, it should be taken into consideration that there is surplus from both instruments that could be used for this survey.

The United States mentioned that the dolphin abundance survey is also important for them, as well as the matter of safety of observer at sea, so these two issues should be priorities for the use of the AIDCP surplus.

Ecuador asked where the resources would come from to conclude the dolphin survey since it implies a cost of over US\$ 4 million just for the trial survey, and the AIDCP surplus is only US\$ 1.75 million.

Mexico mentioned that the Mexican tuna industry is currently trying to obtain an oceanographic research vessel (*Jorge Carranza*) to conduct the survey and that would reduce costs. Mexico invited other Parties to seek additional contributions for this research.

#### **11. Report of the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group to Promote and Publicize the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System**

Mr. Julio Guevara, who chaired the meeting of the Working Group, presented his report (Appendix 3), noting that the group emphasized that the label is not being used enough and that it was suggested to change the name of the group to designate it as a group for the promotion **and use** of the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification, but there was no consensus on that regard. Furthermore, Mexico reported that it appealed the decision of the WTO panel on the tuna embargo case.

Several delegations expressed that the group is less and less active in terms of the objectives for which it was created, which is unfortunate given that the label has been recognized and awarded internationally.

#### **12. Report of the 63<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the International Review Panel**

Mr. Julio Guevara, Presider of the 63<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Panel, presented his report (Appendix 4), noting that the Panel issued the following recommendations:

- 1) Grant an internal reallocation of DMLs for a Venezuelan vessel that forfeited its DML. The allocation would be proportional to the remaining of the fishing year.
- 2) Approve the handling of cases with possible infractions as presented in section 7 of the Presider's report.

The Meeting of the Parties approved these recommendations.

#### **13. Other business**

No other business was discussed.

#### **14. Place and date of next meeting**

The next Meeting of the Parties will be held in October 2018 with specific dates to be defined.

## **15. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 20:30 p.m. on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018.