# INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

## INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE FOR ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

**15 - 16 June 2026**

**La Jolla, California (EE. UU.)**

# MEETING REPORT

### AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Update on the informal consultative meeting between the IATTC Committee for Administration and Finance (CAF) and the AIDCP Ad Hoc Working Group on Financial Strengthening.
4. Review of the draft budgets for 2027 and 2028.
5. Update on staff changes and their budgetary implications.
6. Review of the 2025 CAF recommendations: Meeting Report.
7. Review of the auditor's recommendations.
8. Financial regulations.
9. Update on the cyberattack.
10. Other matters.
11. Recommendations.
12. Closure.

### ANNEXES

1. List of participants.
2. Intersessional CAF Recommendations.

The Intersessional Meeting of the Committee for Administration and Finance was held in the city of La Jolla, California, on June 15–16, 2026.

### 1. Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened by the Chair of the Committee, Ms. Rachael Wadsworth of the United States. The following Members were present at the meeting: Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, United States, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and Venezuela. Canada, Colombia, Korea, the European Union, and Vanuatu participated remotely. The Chair announced that a quorum was present and acknowledged that there were letters circulated in advance of this meeting where some delegations noted they could not attend the hours of this meeting. The Chair recommended that the times of meetings, especially in virtual format is something the Commission needs to discuss.

### 2. Adoption of the agenda

The provisional agenda was adopted with a recommendation from Guatemala, under the item of other business, two additional items would be discussed. First, the formula for calculating financial contributions, and second, the distribution of costs of the International Dolphin Conservation Program between the IATTC and the AIDCP. In addition, a presentation on the status of the IATTC Integrated Port Sampling Program from the coordinator of the program, Cristina De La Cadena, would also be provided.

### 3. Update on the informal consultative meeting between the IATTC Committee for Administration and Finance (CAF) and the AIDCP Ad Hoc Working Group on Financial Strengthening

The Co-Chairs of this group, Ms. Rachael Wadsworth and Ms. Yarkelia Vergara, presented updates from the meeting of the Informal Consultation Meeting between the IATTC CAF and the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Financial Strengthening of the AIDCP that took place virtually January 27-28, 2026. The CAF Chair recognized that the 2nd informal consultative meeting between the IATTC Committee for Administration and Finance (CAF) and the AIDCP Ad Hoc Working Group on Financial Strengthening had been scheduled to be held virtually on May 20–21, 2026; however, it could not take place because no agreement was reached on the meeting time.

The European Union raised concerns regarding the consistent scheduling of virtual meetings at 1:00 p.m. or 2:00 p.m. (San Diego time), which forces European delegations to work in the early hours of the morning. Supported by Guatemala, Nicaragua, and the United States, the EU requested that the Commission adopt a clear, centralized policy so that, as a general rule, meetings be held during the official business hours of the Secretariat's headquarters (9:00 a.m. San Diego time).

### 4. Review of the draft budgets for 2027 and 2028

Ms. Claudia Hernández, the IATTC Secretariat's Accounting Coordinator, presented the financial analysis for FY2025 and the budget requested for FY2027 and projected for FY2028. The already-approved 2026 budget was set at US$9,250,000, while for 2027 an operating budget of approximately US$8.7 million was requested.

Additionally, the Secretariat proposed the creation of a *Contingency Fund* equivalent to 0.5% of the operating budget, to cover urgent legal or labor-related contingencies, given that the Commission does not currently have a budget line of this type. It was also reported that approximately $170,000 was spent on the severance item in FY2025. The United States further noted that it would be useful to understand whether the amount proposed by the Secretariat for a contingency line item is under an appropriate magnitude to respond to observed variations in costs, unexpected expenses.

For the budget requested for FY2027, the line items for which increases were requested were mentioned, including the IT line item, allocated to the replacement of obsolete equipment.

Regarding the Contingency Fund, United States, Guatemala, and Mexico requested that the Secretariat prepare a risk analysis and establish policies, terms of reference, and strict access rules (through a resolution) for consideration.

When presenting the severance expenses for FY2025, the United States requested access to the calculation formula used for this process. The Director clarified that the formula is contained in the Commission's staff regulations currently in force. The staff regulations are currently under review, and there is a proposal for a new regulation that has been under review for more than two years to align with United Nations standards. The Director noted that the Staff Regulations constitute the labor standard governing the Commission. The Director offered that the staff regulations could be made available on the Commission’s website if needed.

Mexico asked whether the merit-based increase system was still in effect. The Director reported that it has not been in use for many years, and that this was the cause of the across-the-board salary increase approved in 2022, but the recent staff adjustments are intended to stabilize the budget so that merit-based promotions can be reactivated.

Under this agenda item, outstanding financial contributions were also discussed, occupying a considerable portion of the session and highlighting the Commission's operational difficulties amid the lack of liquidity. It was reported that the accumulated amount of outstanding payments totals US$8.2 million, of which US$4.2 million corresponds to 2026. Mexico and the United States inquired about the accounting treatment of these outstanding arrears, with a view to ensuring that payments are not reflected as a surplus in the current year's budget. In response, the Secretariat clarified that all payments received are first applied to settle the oldest outstanding debt of the relevant Member, thereby clearly distinguishing revenue attributable to the current year's budget from that attributable to previous years' budgets.

The case of Panama was highlighted, noting that the country pays its annual assessment and, through a payment arrangement, contributes approximately $500,000 per year toward its historical debt.or its part, the Venezuelan delegation clarified that its non-payment is not due to refusal, but rather to impossibilities arising from external political and administrative problems in mobilizing funds. Consequently, it requested that coercive measures not be applied while it seeks to establish an initial payment mechanism and an addendum like the one agreed with Panama.

The Committee took note of the amounts announced as the operating budget for 2027 for discussion at the next session. Guatemala reserved the right to submit comments on this matter once the AIDCP budget is ready.

The United States asked why there is no proposed budget for the IPSP program after 2026 given the language in the tropical tuna Resolution requires the program will remain with the necessary budget. The Director clarified that the budget can be presented after the SAC generally supported the IPSP program, though the SAC did not discuss the budget or any changes to the program. The Director explained the program would cost about $30,000 less, and made several changes, one of these has to do with transfer of coordinator to Ecuador and a significant reduction in her salary.

The United States recalled the extensive discussion at last year's meeting and the understanding of the United States was at bare minimum for the current fiscal year it would maintain the existing management structure of that program with the Program Coordinator located in La Jolla. The United States expressed confusion why this would change considering that was a major component of our discussions last year and was very concerned about this major change being made without consultation given it was discussed extensively last year.

The EU agreed with the United States and had the same understanding that last year we had an agreement on several issues. This was part of that agreement, discussed at length. Canada also noted its view, in line with the United States and the EU, was that of surprise to hear about this relocation proposal, as the agreement was contingent on no relocation previously. Korea also expressed support to the views and concerns expressed by the United States and European Union with respect to implications for changes in the budget of the program.

Guatemala clarified there would be no change in only 2026, only applies to 2027 and the Director agreed. Guatemala also highlighted that the members should be careful about micromanaging the decisions of the Secretariat. The Director explained that we want the program to continue, but costs have always been the issue so efforts were made to save the program and reduce costs, but if a larger budget is approved then we have no problem.

This discussion continued later in the meeting where the Director agreed that there would be no change in location of the Program Coordinator located in La Jolla, without the explicit agreement of the Commission at the upcoming meeting in Lisbon, Portugal.

**5. Update on staff adjustments and their budgetary implications**

It was reported that an expenditure reduction of approximately $500,000 was recorded in the salaries and benefits line, resulting from adjustments to IATTC's staff structure.

The discussion continued with a presentation by the Program Coordinator, Cristina de la Cadena, who presented the background and costs of the Integrated Port Monitoring Program. She reported that the budget approved in 2026 was $460,000, and that the initial request for 2027 was $420,000.

She further reported that Ecuador's strict labor legislation had increased field staff costs by 20% (due to social security and occupational health obligations). In addition, upon exceeding 20 employees in the country, the law requires the hiring of a local Human Talent Coordinator, the cost of which will be partially absorbed by the program.

Mexico stated that the sampling and monitoring of certain vessels should respond to scientific considerations, and that it is not necessary to expand the program. It insisted that the exercise should remain a sampling effort—not a census—and that its cost should not be charged to the regular budget, but that alternative funding sources should be identified to reduce costs without losing sight of the scientific value of monitoring bigeye catches. In a similar vein, Venezuela commented why sampling of the vessels with the largest catches has not been prioritized, suggesting more selective and deliberate monitoring. Guatemala, for its part, noted that outstanding issues remain regarding labor and budgetary management, and maintained that the Commission should not assume labor-related risks that should fall to other parties. Guatemala also noted that on positive point, the program improves data quality, and is in full alignment with the Commission’s scientific goals and this program should continue.

Mexico reiterated that its objection is not to the program itself, but to its financing, noting that Mexican samplers already existed with previously budgeted salaries; the Coordinator clarified that there are currently two new samplers in Mazatlán, in addition to the two existing ones who continue to collaborate. For its part, Vanuatu stated that it agreed with the budget presented, requesting that the issue of occupational safety be addressed in future reports and that the sampling methodology and universe be presented, while Ecuador invoked paragraph 37 of Resolution C-25-01 to argue that the program should be maintained, as it represents an improvement in catch estimates. The EU also recognized the value of program is well-established and its understanding that the program is valid for duration of management period. Any changes to the program would require a decision by the Commission and the EU was not in agreement with any changes and reserve our position on budget being proposed.

Cristina clarified that, since 2026, the port sampling program replaced the traditional sampling program, and while it does support the bigeye measure, the goal is to collect information from the three tropical tuna species because it provides size and weight comparison data for the whole fleet. This information is used for the following year’s fisheries status report.

The discussion ended with Guatemala and the United States suggesting that the Secretariat put together a table comparison showing costs of previous port sampling program, previous EMP, and costs of IPSP in order to show if/how the programs were combined and any efficiencies achieved.

**6. Review of the Auditor's recommendations**

The CAF Chair reviewed compliance with the recommendations issued by the auditing firm Baker Tilly. The key points highlighted in this review were as follows:

- **Accounting Controls:** The Director confirmed that the accounting system has already been migrated to the cloud, limiting administrator access exclusively to IT staff.
- **Confidentiality:** The Director provided an update that all IATTC staff (including field offices) have formally signed conflict-of-interest declaration letters and confidentiality agreements, which are kept on file in their respective personnel records.
- **Capacity Fund (Courses):** The Director announced a 15-day course on "Port State Control" to be held in October in Costa Rica (with FAO support), as well as a future advanced course on stock assessment at the Achotines Laboratory.
- **Vanuatu's Request:** The Vanuatu delegation formally requested that all invitations to training courses explicitly indicate the availability of bilingual instruction (English/Spanish), as previous communications sent only in Spanish had limited the participation of its officials. The Secretariat confirmed that 90% of attendees are Spanish speakers, but that instructors are equipped to accommodate English speakers.

The Committee thanked the Secretariat for this follow-up work.

**7. Review of the 2025 CAF recommendations: CAF-12 Meeting Report**

The Chair presented the CAF Recommendations from 2025 and the progress from the Secretariat on addressing these recommendations. The Chair noted this would be presented again at the CAF meeting in Lisbon, Portugal.

**8. Financial regulations**

The Director attempted to begin the review of the draft revision of the financial regulations (last updated in 2008). However, Mexico, Guatemala, the United States, and the EU commented that it was not feasible to work through a 20-page document line by line. The United States noted it previously requested a tracked changes version of proposed revisions in order to compare with existing regulations. And additionally, preferred to consider making changes to the existing regulations based on identified and existing deficiencies. For example, where the Director has found deficiencies in the text and the members have identified issues. The EU agreed with the United States on these points. Guatemala suggested an intersessional roadmap so we could receive this document with tracked changes and another with an assessment from the Secretariat with high-level areas where current regulations require attention to help focus the conversation. For this reason, it was agreed not to debate the document during the session. The CAF requested that the CAF Chair develop an "*intersessional roadmap*" and asked the Secretariat to provide the document with tracked changes, together with an executive analysis of the deficiencies and risks of the current rules.

**9. Update on the cyberattack**

The IT Coordinator, Rolando Desnis, presented a comprehensive report on the state of the network following two severe cyberattacks (ransomware and a wiper attack) and a third, recent attempt that was successfully blocked. He explained that the initial attacks took advantage of outdated infrastructure, including unsupported Windows Server 2012 systems, outdated firewalls, and communication links of only 300 Mbps.

As an emergency response, 4 million files and 6 servers were migrated to the Azure cloud. This produced an exponential spike in monthly storage costs. The IT team is currently carrying out a data cleanup (archiving) effort to move "infrequently used historical data" to local servers in La Jolla, keeping only operational data within the SharePoint environment in order to optimize costs. The Director warned that the current website is outdated and lacks automated communication with the SharePoint environment (Web Integration – Kentico), which requires staff to manually transcribe data and upload documents.

In light of the above, a draft proposal was presented for a 5-year plan (with an initial migration cost and subsequent hosting fees estimated at US$38,000 for the first year and US$148,000 over 5 years) to move the website's hosting to Kentico's servers, delegating responsibility for perimeter security to the external provider. Server modernization and the restructuring of networks and IP addresses have been fundamental steps implemented internally to strengthen the security model against AI-driven automated threats. The United States asked to clarify if the external hosting for the website with integrated security is to protect against cyber attacks or something else and asked if members would see a proposal with cost estimates. The U.S. also asked if the Secretariat keeps local copies of historical data to protect them in the event of cloud data being compromised, to which the Secretariat confirmed they were doing that.

Several delegations thanked the Secretariat for its work and for the information provided in responding to the cyberattack incidents, acknowledging that such incidents are difficult to predict and prevent, and that it is difficult to guarantee protection that is fully sufficient against them. In this regard, some delegations expressed support for establishing a permanent budget line dedicated to this issue, in order to ensure the security systems necessary for the Commission's efficient, uninterrupted operation. Mexico agreed on the need to continue working on this issue to prevent the loss of the Commission's valuable information, although it noted that, given the costs involved, the work should proceed in stages to ensure that available resources are sufficient.

Other delegations expressed an additional concern regarding the outages the Commission's website has experienced on several occasions in recent months, emphasizing that it is an essential reference tool for all delegations, since it hosts the main reference materials. Based on this, they suggested that the Secretariat send a notice whenever the website is unavailable, so that delegations are informed in a timely manner.

**10. Other matters**

Guatemala raised the issue of the contribution formula and emphasized the need to resolve the situation of having a standard in the Commission to clarify how the contributions are going to be calculated. Noting there were two proposals in 2024, one tabled by Canada, and another by several Central American countries in the past, but there was no consensus. Guatemala recommended a roadmap that will help gather ideas on how to resolve it. The United States noted that there was no consensus in the room and given the situation regarding C-15-05, it would hope that the CAF could agree and commit to finding a way that returns us to a situation in which member contributions are calculated based on a formula and becomes part of the budget process; this would help to avoid arguing about existing situations and recommend a path forward. Canada agreed with suggestions to come up with a gameplan to figure out the formula, which was its previous proposal.

In addition, Guatemala raised the issue of the cost-sharing arrangement for the observer program (currently paid 30% by the IATTC and 70% by the AIDCP).

Venezuela and Mexico argued that observers' duties have evolved and that they now collect a massive amount of scientific data required exclusively under IATTC resolutions. They noted that the AIDCP operates at a deficit and suggested that the IATTC should cover a larger percentage (e.g., 50%). The United States and the European Union expressed the difficulty of assuming greater costs within the IATTC (which would fall on member States) in order to relieve the contributions paid by vessel owners under the AIDCP. The United States argued that the direct cost of placing an observer on board arises from the AIDCP mandate (100% coverage for Class 6 vessels) and that the fact that they also fill out additional IATTC forms does not increase the logistical cost of the trip.

**11. Recommendations**

The Committee formulated and reviewed a series of recommendations for submission to the Commission for its consideration, which are included as Annex 2.

**12. Closure**

The meeting was closed at 5:00 p.m., La Jolla, California time, on June 16, 2026.

**Annex 1**

**List of participants**

**Annex 2**

## Recommendations of the CAF Intersessional Meeting.

**Woking Group AIDCP - CAF**

- Ask the IATTC Staff to prepare an options paper identifying budget issues that need to be addressed, including some of the elements and outcomes of the AIDCP WG-CAF meetings. This document could summarize the different issues at stake and provide options for the Commission to consider.

**Budget presentation.**

- Recommend the Commission consider mechanisms to encourage payments from countries in arrears, including specific rules on how the Secretariat should address it.
- Request the Staff to project costs of the IPSP for the remainder of the term of Resolution C-25-01.
- Request the IATTC Staff to provide an analysis of the IT security risks associated with hiring staff in different countries.
- Recommend that the Commission consider a Resolution on establishing a contingency fund and associated rules for its access and use.
- Ask the Secretariat to prepare an informative document breaking down the percentage cost of the IATTC's Tuna-Dolphin Program from the last few years prior to the adoption of the Panama Declaration.
- Request the Secretariat to provide an analysis on the contingencies associated with the operation of the Commission that might be covered by a contingency fund. For further consideration by the Commission.
- Request that the Director invite each Member that has not submitted its contribution to provide its views and the rationale or justification for its non-submission.

**Meeting times.**

- Recommend the Commission consider arrangements for meetings during the intersessional periods, including establishing rules for hybrid and virtual meeting times.

**Cyberattacks.**

- Request that the IATTC Staff prepare a budget with cost estimates for all the proposed enhanced security measures discussed, including external hosting for the IATTC website.
- Request that the Secretariat send an email to the members when the webpage is deactivated.

**IPSP.**

- Request that the IATTC Staff prepare a report on the transition from the EMP and traditional port sampling program to the IPSP, including any changes in staffing, protocols, and data collection. Include a table showing the costs of the three programs, and any efficiencies achieved.
- Recommend that the IATTC staff present a report on the progress made in developing the systematization model for processing data obtained from audio recordings, including an evaluation of its methodology, accuracy levels, and quality control mechanisms, so that Members may assess the reliability and suitability of this tool.

**Financial regulations.**

- Request the CAF's chair develop an intersessional roadmap before the next CAF on the financial regulations. To support the decision making, this could include the Director's draft in track changes and another document, an assessment, from the Secretariat with high-level areas where current regulations require attention, where there are deficiencies, and where clarifications could be required.

**Formula.**

- Request the CAF's chair develop a roadmap to gather ideas on how to make progress on resolving the issue of the formula.
- Request the Secretariat to make available the details of their calculations to establish the assessed contributions due by members, and how these contributions have been adjusted to meet the budget. Include last year that the formula was included in the calculations.