

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
2ND WORKSHOP ON THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE, GOALS, AND
SCOPE OF AN ELECTRONIC MONITORING SYSTEM (EMS) IN THE
EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN (EPO)

(by videoconference)
13-15 December 2021

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

The 2nd Workshop on the Institutional Structure, Goals, and Scope of an Electronic Monitoring System (EMS) in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) was held by videoconference from 13 to 15 December 2021. A list of participants is provided in Appendix 1.

1. Opening of the meeting

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Brad Wiley of the IATTC Policy and Compliance Division.

There were no comments on the draft agenda.

The 2nd EMS workshop was convened in the context of the terms of reference adopted by the Commission in [Resolution C-21-02](#) for a series of workshops to elaborate on the necessary aspects of an eventual EMS program to be approved by the Members. The goals of these workshops are not only to garner any conclusions and recommendations on the covered topics, but also to educate participants and foster communication and work towards a common understanding among stakeholders on EM matters. Participants were asked to consider and comment broadly on discussion topics of institutional structure and framework, and goals and scope, but to consider the application of these EMS concepts to the differentiated components of the EPO tuna fleets.

The Chair indicated that IATTC staff would give two presentations over the course of the meeting: the first presentation corresponding to [EMS-02-01](#) on the topic of *Institutional Structure of an EMS in the EPO*, and a second corresponding to [EMS-02-02](#) on the topic of *Goals and Scope of an EMS in the EPO*. Discussions took place consistent with the Chatham House Rule, meaning that comments would not be attributed to any individual, government or other affiliation, unless attribution was explicitly requested by the speaker.

2. Discussion of EMS-02-01, Institutional Structure of an EMS in the EPO

Mr. Marlon Roman gave a presentation complementing the paper prepared by IATTC staff ([EMS-02-01](#)) Within the context of the paper, the staff proposed a number of draft/strawman recommendations with the goal of stimulating focused discussion on a number of topics.

Staff Recommendation: ***Establish a single, unified EMS Program for the EPO following the International Dolphin Conservation Program (IDCP) model, in which databases, standards, procedures and protocols are standardized across all components/individual programs and are compatible with existing IDCP and IATTC practices.***

- Some participants who are not Party to the AIDCP were confused or distracted by IATTC staff's reference to the AIDCP as a possible model for the structure of an IATTC EMS, in part because the AIDCP is a stand-alone agreement, and they did not believe that the creation of an IATTC EMS required a new convention-level instrument. IATTC staff explained that the reference to the AIDCP model was solely in relation to its hybrid structure with both centralized and compatible national components. In that sense, it was agreed that it would make more sense to refer to the structure of the IATTC purse-seine observer program.
- Discussions of a fully centralized EMS program run entirely through IATTC were generally negative, citing the likely very high price tag for such an endeavor and also noting that many CPCs already had national purse-seine or longline observer programs that could be expanded to include

EMS components.

- Some participants expressed a preference for highly decentralized system comprised exclusively of national programs, which would be harmonized, that would provide summarized data to the IATTC according to a set of agreed minimum standards and fields. Specifically, one participant suggested that for longline vessels, EMS would be best approached as an extension/expansion of the current national programs for human observers. In this way, the number of additional IATTC staff needed for an EMS program might be only 1 or 2 additional staff to oversee coordination of the national program efforts.
- Other participants expressed concerns about a model that would mandate exclusively the use of national programs, noting that some CPCs might not have the capacity or desire to establish and maintain a national EMS program. Thus, they would prefer a centralized or hybrid EMS program that allowed for the possibility for IATTC to provide the required EMS coverage and process the resulting data.
- One participant indicated that it was hard for them to consider preferences for options for institutional structure without corresponding budget and cost estimates for each approach.
- One idea is that some aspects of EMS institutional structure might vary by vessel type, as it does currently for human observers on purse-seine vessels where there is a centralized IATTC program and the option to have a compatible national program, as compared to human observers on longline vessels for which there is no centralized IATTC observer program, or for transshipment carrier vessels, which is contracted out to a single source third party who provides observer coverage for all participating CPCs.

Staff Recommendation: ***Agree that national EMS programs that may be set up to complement the IATTC EMS Program, can be fully or partially contracted out to third parties, but only if they apply the common standards, protocols, procedures, and databases of the overarching EPO EMS Program.***

- Several participants agreed that the use of third party vendors (and also decentralized national programs) would require oversight through a process of accreditation/certification, confirming that the programs meet all IATTC established standards.

Staff Recommendation: ***To the extent practical, seek to ensure harmonization and compatibility of EPO EMS with WCPFC EMS procedures and standards among others to facilitate cooperation and exchange of information as appropriate and necessary between the two organizations.***

- Participants expressed general support for coordination and harmonization of EMS standards with WCPFC, and some concern that the amount of coordination to date was too little.
- One participant noted that at its most recent meeting in December 2021, WCPFC committed to the establishment of EMS standards by the end of 2022, prompting other participants to recommend that IATTC-WCPFC coordination should happen as a matter of priority given the more advanced stage of the WCPFC process.
- There was also some support for cooperation with SPRFMO and other regional bodies in the Pacific, but with a lower priority, and where there was a demonstrated need/benefit to such coordination.
- One participant stressed that any cross-RFMO coordination should exclude matters related to the possible use of EMS for monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) matters.

Staff Recommendations: ***Agree that all EM data resulting from national EMS programs (and, if required for research purposes, the underlying EM records) be shared with the IATTC staff. AND : Task the IATTC staff with coordinating the EPO EMS and integrating all derived EM data for their***

future utilization and analysis, as appropriate

- A couple of participants indicated that national legislation might foresee difficulties in sharing original EM records or complete EM data sets because of limitations related to confidential, commercial data. Instead, what they could supply to IATTC would be a subset of data, according to pre-agreed minimum fields and formats, similar to the minimum data fields currently prescribed for LL observer data under C-19-08.

3. Discussion of EMS-02-02, Goals and Scope of an EMS in the EPO

Mr. Marlon Roman gave a presentation complementing the paper prepared by IATTC staff ([EMS-02-02](#)). Within the context of the paper, the staff proposed a number of draft/strawman recommendations with the goal of stimulating focused discussion on a number of topics.

Staff Recommendation: ***The EPO EMS should generate data to be made be available for use in both scientific and compliance related activities, as defined by the Members.***

- Multiple participants indicated that in order for them to approve of and participate in an IATTC EMS program, the use of EM data would need to be limited to purely scientific endeavors and would not be available for MSC purposes.
- Other participants expressed that from their perspective, the scope and purpose of IATTC EMS would need to include MCS considerations, similar to the way that purse-seine data collected by human observers is subsequently analyzed to identify issues of possible non-compliance.
- A third view expressed was that the use of EMS data should mirror what is done with human observer data for various fleets. That is, because both purse-seine and transshipment observer data are already used for MCS purposes, EMS data should be used in the same ways. But in their view, because the current longline observer resolution ([C-19-08](#)) refers to “scientific observers”, it is implied that the use of human-generated longline observer data for MCS is not currently allowed, so if scope is to expand to MCS for human and EMS data collected on longline vessels, amendments to existing measures would be needed. In reply, another participant pointed out that purse-seine observers are also referred to as scientific observers (they must have college degrees in a biological science), but that this has never been interpreted to mean that PS observer data could not be examined by IATTC or the flag state for identification of possible instances of non-compliance.
- Another observation was that using EMS data for MCS purposes could be problematic if the EMS coverage rate was less than 100%. That is, some vessel might refuse to have an MCS tool installed on their vessel if the requirement was not universal for all of their competitors. Thus, given that some participants had indicated that, for example, 100% EMS coverage on longline vessels would not be practical from a financial standpoint, the push for the use of EMS data for MCS could become an obstacle to consensus. A second participant agreed, noting that if EMS is used only for scientific endeavors, the coverage rate could be dictated by data needs, but if it were to be used for MCS purposes as well, coverage would need to be 100%.
- One participant noted that their current EMS program was originally designed exclusively with MCS objectives in mind, and that only later did they consider that some of the data also had scientific value they could use.

Staff Recommendation: ***The EPO EMS should include the following types of vessels operating in the IATTC Convention Area: tuna purse-seine vessels of all sizes; all longline vessels of 12 meters in length or more and motherships of longline vessels less than 12 meters in length, and transshipment authorized carriers.***

- There were a range of views expressed about whether the purpose of EMS would be to supplement the work human observers, to provide coverage where obstacles to human observer placement exist, or perhaps to serve as a replacement for human observers.

- IATTC staff explained that they did not necessarily view EMS systems and human observers as mutually exclusive for all vessels. Although it seems clear that some vessel outfitted with EMS would not be able to carry human observers, for purse-seine, longline and transshipment vessels that currently carry human observers, EMS systems could serve a complimentary role. For example, on purse-seine vessels, EMS systems might allow human observers to accomplish additional scientific tasks such as biological sampling or spill samples. On longline vessels, EMS systems could observe sets or portions of sets where the human observer is not present on the deck during retrieval of the line, which is a common occurrence.
- Some participants stressed that EMS should not replace existing human observer requirements, such that the 100% coverage on Class-6 purse-seine vessels and the 5% minimum observer coverage currently mandated for longline vessel greater than 20m LOA could not be decreased or replaced by EMS.
- Alternately, another participant indicated that the 100% human observer coverage for Class 6 purse-seine vessels were already a very large burden and that they would not be in favor of incurring additional expenses for those vessels for limited additional gains, in their view. Accordingly, EMS could be used in place of human observers on Class-6 vessels, or alternately, that implementation of EMS on purse-seine vessels would be only for vessels smaller than Class 6, which are not currently mandated to carry human observers in most situations.
- One participant suggested that the current 100% human observer requirements on transshipment vessels would not make sense if EMS was deployed. That is, they viewed EMS on transshipment vessels as an alternative to human observers, rather than a complementing, additional component.
- A participant suggested that their view is that EMS coverage should be 100% for purse-seine vessels, but that 100% coverage for longline vessels would not be attainable because of cost.
- One participant expressed enthusiasm for the great potential for EMS on small purse-seine vessels in order to increase our knowledge of the size and species composition of their catches, bycatch species, interaction rates, destiny/fates, etc.
- Other participants highlighted that maximizing EMS coverage on all vessel types could provide a good backstop for observer data during times such as a global pandemic, when placement of human observers might not be possible.