

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
PERMANENT WORKING GROUP ON FLEET CAPACITY

23RD MEETING

Phoenix, Arizona, USA
27 July 2022

CHAIR'S REPORT

AGENDA

	Documents
1. Opening of the meeting	
2. Adoption of the agenda	
3. Review of changes in the utilization of fleet capacity in the EPO	CAP-23-01
4. Consultant's report on the proposal to address the management of fishing capacity in the EPO: presentation and discussion of the proposal	
5. Review of pending capacity claims, disputes, adjustments, and requests according to the list presented at the 89 th meeting of the IATTC and referred to in document CAP-17 INF-A REV (14 May 2016)	
6. Recommendations to the Commission	
7. Other business	
8. Adjournment	

The 23rd meeting of the Permanent Working Group on Fleet Capacity was held in Phoenix, Arizona, USA, on 27 July 2022.

1. Opening of the meeting

In the absence of the Chair of the Working Group, Mr. Luis Molledo (European Union), the meeting was opened by the Director *ad interim* of the Commission, Ambassador Jean-François Pulvenis, and, at his suggestion, the Working Group agreed to ask the Chair of the Commission to chair the 23rd meeting, which he accepted.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The Committee adopted the provisional agenda that had been circulated without comments or suggestions.

3. Review of changes in the utilization of fleet capacity in the EPO

The Director *ad interim* briefly recalled the origin and mandate of the Group, initially the limitation on the growth of the purse-seine fleet capacity and, after the entry into force of the Antigua Convention, its reduction. He noted that the Commission had been very successful in limiting the capacity of the purse-seine fleet due to the establishment of the Regional Vessel Register and the adoption of Resolution C-02-03 but had not been successful in limiting the capacity regardless of the adoption in 2005 of a Plan for Regional Management of Fishing Capacity and the numerous efforts and activities that followed the adoption of this plan, for example, exploring the possibility of vessel buyback schemes. While authorized capacity has remained essentially stable in recent years, at 302,863 m³—even though this represents a somewhat higher figure than the operational capacity (271,723 m³)—the amount of potential capacity, with the total volume of all pending capacity requests listed in document CAP-23-01, would reach 355,530 m³. Hence the importance and urgency of exploring and adopting suitable mechanisms, if not to directly reduce

capacity, then to do so indirectly through an alternative approach, for example, as described in the proposal presented by consultant Dr. Dale Squires under agenda item 4.

4. Consultant's report on the proposal to address the management of fishing capacity in the EPO: presentation and discussion of the proposal

Dr. Dale Squires then made a detailed presentation focusing on a proposal to establish a transferable day credit scheme for purse-seine vessels listed in the Regional Vessel Register. Similar to the DML system under the AIDCP, the allocation of transferable days would be made in favor of the CPCs, which would allocate them individually to the vessels in their respective fleet. Day transfers could be made from vessel to vessel. Additionally, a multi-vessel company could freely reallocate the number of transferable days among those vessels, for example, so that best performing and most efficient vessels have a greater number of days.

Dr. Squires emphasized that his proposal was a three-year pilot project, so the Commission could decide whether to continue or modify it based on accumulated experience. The main benefit of the proposed scheme would be eliminating the 72-day closure period and the possibility of fishing year-round, which would also ensure a continuous supply to the processing plants.

From the discussion that followed this presentation stems the need to continue working on the proposal and refining it before it can achieve consensus.

Indeed, several Members raised critical points aimed at the general approach or at particular aspects of the proposal, such as the situation of CPCs that would not have vessels that could receive transferable days; the feasibility of ensuring efficient control and monitoring of how the fishing days would be allocated in practice; the complexity of possible transfers between vessels belonging to different owners (unlike the situation of transfers between vessels belonging to the same company); the implementation of the scheme on fleets with other characteristics such as those fishing on floating objects and those fishing on dolphins. In summary, the main approach of the proposal was criticized for being economic and not considering social and other factors; additionally, its implementation would result in a significant increase in fishing pressure on the resource, in addition to the fact that, ultimately, it does not directly solve the problem of overcapacity in terms of cubic meters of well volume.

For this reason, no final decision was reached on the proposal presented, leaving as pending work, among other things, the elaboration of a draft resolution that would set out very clear regulations, as well as the way to ensure a well-programmed transition from the current scheme to the one that would eventually be adopted.

5. Review of pending capacity claims, disputes, adjustments, and requests according to the list presented at the 89th meeting of the IATTC and referred to in document CAP-17 INF-A REV (14 May 2016)

At the suggestion of the Secretariat, the Working Group first considered two cases that had been submitted for consideration by the Members through memorandums dated 5 July 2022. The first case addressed whether blast freezer rooms should be considered as wells that could be taken into account in the calculation of a vessel's total volume in cubic meters. The second case was on the list of pending cases related to Ecuador's repeated request that this vessel, the Victoria A, be included in the Regional Vessel Register on the list of inactive/sunk vessels. In both cases, the discussion failed to reach a point of agreement and, thus a consensus.

On the other hand, some delegations stressed that, in their view, it was necessary to consider all pending cases in no order of priority, and several of them reiterated the requests they had already submitted, some of them on several occasions. Statements were also made by Peru, Costa Rica, Colombia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Vanuatu, and Bolivia, which led other delegations to recall that no capacity should be allocated without establishing the plan for the management of fleet capacity which has been a work in progress for

several years.

6. Recommendations to the Commission

In conclusion, the Working Group did not adopt any specific recommendation other than the overall recommendation to continue exploring a satisfactory mechanism to reduce capacity directly or indirectly, including through a draft resolution establishing clear regulations. The Group also called for a future review of only those requests already submitted and included in the list contained in document CAP-23-01 and to take into account the reiteration by Bolivia of its request which is not included on this list.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 13:30 on 27 July 2022.