



1ST WCPFC-IATTC CONSULTATIVE MEETING

CANCUN (MEXICO)
24 JUNE 2007



REPORT OF THE MEETING

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Overview of the Memorandum of Understanding
4. Review of areas for collaboration:
 - a. Data and information
 - b. Stock assessment
 - c. Management
5. Other business
6. Date and place of next meeting
7. Adjournment

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

The first Consultative Meeting between the IATTC and the WCPFC was held in Cancun, on Sunday, 24 June 2007. The meeting was opened by Mr. Brian Hallman, who had been asked by the two secretariats to chair the meeting. The objective of the meeting was to inform members of current and future areas of collaboration needed between the two Commissions and collect comments from participants. The Chairman said the outcome of the meeting would be a report agreed by the Secretariats to the Commissions, and possibly the Secretariats seeking guidance from the Commissions on how to address several matters. The meeting reviewed three documents:

1. MOU between the WCPFC and the IATTC;
2. Draft Program of Work for IATTC-WCPFC collaboration; and
3. Draft agreement on the exchange of data between the IATTC and the WCPFC.

The fourth document that the Secretariats had prepared, draft outline on cooperation in the area of overlap of IATTC and WCPFC, was not introduced because of time constraints.

A request was made by one of the IATTC members that in future all meeting documents be made available in both languages of that Commission. It was also noted that IATTC members would require simultaneous interpretation at the meetings. While the meeting is a meeting between secretariats and not a consultation between the two Commissions, the IATTC secretariat acknowledged the importance of the use of its official languages and undertook to provide necessary translation.

Regarding the substantive items in the meeting, Japan stressed that several items in the program of work and the draft agreement on the exchange of data include important policy implications, which need to be discussed at each Commission to obtain clear guidance before putting them forward to the consultative meeting. Japan therefore reserved its position on all of the issues discussed during this consultation and requested that these matters be referred back to the consideration of the member governments of the Commissions.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE MOU

At the request of the Chairman, Dr Allen reviewed the MOU. It was noted that the collaboration between WCPFC and IATTC is necessary and required. There was a general understanding among participants that the current MOU should be reviewed regularly and modified as necessary.

3. REVIEW OF AREAS FOR COLLABORATION

This item consisted of a review of the program of work Document CONS-1-03.

a. Data and information

Exchange of scientific and fisheries data.

Dr. Allen introduced the draft agreement on exchange of data between the IATTC and the WCPFC attached as Annex A, noting that this was a work in progress and was not intended to be presented to the Commissions at this stage. He said there was already an agreement in place between the IATTC and SPC for the exchange of scientific data which could be the basis of scientific exchange between the two Commissions. However, that would have to take account of the information handling policy being developed by the WCPFC.

Dr. Allen noted that there were several matters which would require the attention of the Commissions, in particular, that when a vessel being monitored in one area moves to the other, the other secretariat is notified. In that circumstance, the other Commission could be advised of the date, location, catch of the vessel and operational data of such fishing operation in that Commission's Convention Area.

Several comments and concerns were expressed by members as follows:

- In addition to catch and effort data, size distribution data should also be exchanged.
- Section 1, 3 and Appendix 1 in the Draft agreement on the exchange of data between IATTC and WCPFC may not be necessary.
- The timing of data exchange in conjunction with deadline of data submission from members should be carefully decided so that the most recent data could be used for stock assessment.
- The issue of compliance on data collection and submission in the overlapping zone was raised and an exchange of all data related with stock assessment was noted important.
- Some of the issues in the document were matters of policy for the Commissions and needed to be treated carefully.

Mechanism for regular exchange of vessel record

Dr. Allen noted that this point was underway with the collaboration of the secretariats of all the Tuna Commissions which had established the global tuna vessel list (www.tuna-org.org) to share vessel record information. Both Secretariats agreed to delete this action item.

Exchange of information on IUU fishing

Dr. Allen noted that the Commissions do exchange information on IUU vessel lists, and recommended that the Commissions copy each other on correspondence concerning the development of the lists.

It was noted by one of the member governments that the Commissions should be thinking about, as a long-term goal, the mutual recognition by the two organizations of each other's IUU vessel list. In addition, it was suggested that a combined IUU vessel list across all tuna RFMOs in one table, each column representing each RFMO's IUU vessel list, would be useful. For consistency, it was also suggested that both organizations should adopt similar systems regarding the placement of vessels onto, and removal of vessels from, the IUU lists.

It was noted at the meeting that tasks 1, 3 and 4 in the work program could be combined.

Develop Pacific-wide tagging project

Dr. Soh explained the purpose and importance of tagging experiments in tuna science and management. He outlined IATTC and WCPFC tagging projects conducted so far and introduced a WCPFC tagging plan for a pan-Pacific project, noting that such program would be quite expensive, perhaps costing up to five million dollars. Dr. Allen observed that the IATTC staff would be participating in meetings associated with this project at WCPFC-SC3 in August 2007 and stressed that it was very important for the two Commissions to seek funding. Several member governments expressed their support for the concept of Pacific-wide tagging of bigeye tuna, yellowfin and skipjack tuna.

Refinement of bigeye parameters Pacific-wide

Dr. Soh observed that, based on tagging studies to date, the movements of bigeye are geographically restricted. The limited amount of mixing across the Pacific Ocean can create differences in life history characteristics as a function of differences in oceanography and genetic structure. In this regard, Dr. Soh explained that this collaborative research involved a comprehensive review and study of bigeye tuna reproductive biology, such as maturity, spawning locations, sex ratios, and fecundity, for bigeye stock assessment. Dr. Allen confirmed that this project was of great interest to IATTC staff and that it would be good to get more information from longline fleets.

Pacific-wide bigeye assessments, including model development

Both Secretariats noted that there was ongoing work between the staff of the IATTC and the SPC with respect to bigeye stock assessments.

Consider collaborative researches for other tuna-like species (Pacific bluefin, albacore, blue marlin, striped marlin, swordfish)

Dr. Soh explained the collaborative work being undertaken by the SPC with respect to other tuna-like species, and Dr. Allen commented on the IATTC work in this area. The meeting briefly discussed the issue of scientific research on Pacific swordfish, which is of particular interest to member governments. It was noted by one of the member governments that swordfish was a species that could easily be addressed by the two Commissions in a cooperative manner.

Sharks (oceanic white tips and silky shark) stock assessments

Dr. Soh noted that IATTC is currently involved in several collaborative research projects on sharks in the Pacific. He highlighted that each Commission should collect detailed data for stock assessment. Dr. Allen observed that shark research is being addressed in the IATTC Stock Assessment Working Group.

Ecological risk analysis for by-catch species

Dr. Soh noted that the WCPFC has supported 3-5 year research on Ecological Risk Assessment and its planning workshop will be held in Honolulu, 6-9 August 2007. Dr. Allen commented that IATTC staff would be participating in the workshop for mutual collaboration.

Pacific-wide Management Strategy Evaluation

Dr. Soh made some brief comments regarding the MSE work being done in these two areas – no specific progress has been made yet.

No specific comments were received during the presentation on science-related work program. Due to lack of time, the other items in the program of work were not discussed during the consultation.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

Both Secretariats expressed their understanding that the documents reviewed at this meeting would, as appropriate, be refined, circulated for further comments from members, and then provided to the second Consultative Meeting.

5. NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next consultation would take place during the time of the next meeting of the WCPFC, scheduled for 3-7 December in Pohnpei.

Annex 1.

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