

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION  
PERMANENT WORKING GROUP ON FLEET CAPACITY  
**11<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

SAN JOSÉ (COSTA RICA)  
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**DOCUMENT CAP-11-04**

**REVIEW OF THE PLAN FOR THE REGIONAL MANAGEMENT OF FISHING  
CAPACITY**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

At its 66<sup>th</sup> Meeting in June 2000, the Commission adopted two resolutions that instructed the Director to prepare a draft plan of action for the regional management of fishing capacity in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO). The [Plan](#) was approved by the Commission at its 73<sup>rd</sup> Meeting in June 2005.

The objective of the EPO Plan is to achieve, by 1 January 2006 or as soon as possible thereafter, an efficient, equitable and transparent management of tuna-fishing capacity in the EPO, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the fishery targeting species covered by the IATTC Convention. The plan establishes that the target level for the purse-seine is 158,000 cubic meters (m<sup>3</sup>) of total well volume. This target level should be reviewed at regular intervals, and modified if necessary, taking into account the status of the tuna populations.

In 2010, the total well volume of vessels classified as active on the IATTC [Regional Vessel Register](#) was 214,002 m<sup>3</sup>, but the capacity actually utilized was 209,600 m<sup>3</sup>. There is also a usable capacity of 72,784 m<sup>3</sup> not include in the list of active vessels; it consists of (1) the capacity of vessels sunk and/or removed from the Regional Register and not replaced reserved by participants for future use; (2) the capacity authorized in paragraph 10 of Resolution [C-02-03](#) that has not yet been utilized by those participants; and (3) the potential capacity allocated to the United States fleet in paragraph 12. The potential total capacity of the purse-seine fleet in the EPO would thus be 286,786 m<sup>3</sup>, or about 80% greater than the 158,000 m<sup>3</sup> established in the 2005 Capacity Plan. It is therefore necessary to define actions that might reduce capacity in the EPO.

**2. STATUS OF THE ACTIONS ESTABLISHED IN THE PLAN**

The Plan establishes three phases: evaluation of existing capacity, implementation of capacity limits, and definition of economic incentives for reducing capacity or limit its growth. The goal of the first phase has essentially been reached, but phases two and three require actions for their implementation.

**2.1. First phase**

The first phase indicates the following actions:

- a. **Measurement of carrying capacity.** The Plan requires that the carrying capacity of vessels be measured in cubic meters of well volume, thus having an objective, consistent, and clear measurement. Currently, the measurement of vessels, the determination of vessel fees for the observer program, and the management of capacity transfers and movements of vessels on the Regional Register are based on this unit of measurement.
- b. **Diagnosis and assessment.** El Plan establishes that the target capacity of all the fleets that fish for species covered by the IATTC Convention should be determined, and establishes a target level for the purse-seine fishery of 158,000 m<sup>3</sup> and that this should be reviewed on a regular basis. It also estab-

lishes that a target capacity should be determined for the longline fleets and others.

The matter of the optimum level for capacity will be discussed under item 5 of the agenda of this meeting, and Document CAP-11-05 presents a recommendation by the Secretariat for the purse-seine fleet. This level should be reviewed at regular intervals, perhaps every two years, and be included in the agenda of the meetings of the IATTC at the same intervals.

Regarding longline capacity, catch limits are applied to this fleet by means of Recommendation [C-10-01](#) on tuna conservation. However, the Commission should decide whether to limit the capacity of the longline fleet in a manner similar to that for purse seiners. The list of authorized longline vessels greater than 24 meters length overall contains 1,175 vessels of 19 participants.

- c. **Regional Vessel Register.** The Plan contemplates establishing registers of vessels authorized to fish, along with coordinating with other international bodies and establishing a list of vessels engaged in illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. This part has been fulfilled with the Regional Vessel Register established by Resolution [C-00-06](#) and the IATTC IUU list, and in particular by Resolution C-02-03, which in practice establishes a moratorium on the growth of the number of purse-seine vessels, as well as measures for the inclusion of new vessels only through the replacement of vessels already included in the Regional Register.

## 2.2. Second phase

The second phase addresses capacity limits for the longline fleet and others. It also requires that the working group on fleet capacity, by 30 June 2006 or as soon as possible thereafter, consider developing a plan to achieve the target level of purse-seine well volume, with a target date for its implementation. It also addresses the need to develop mechanisms for limiting the capacity of the longline fleets and others, proposing target levels for these fleets and a reduction plan for achieving them.

For purse-seine vessels, there is already a capacity limit through Resolution C-02-03; however, progressing toward reducing capacity would require a plan agreed by the working group, with dates for its implementation. For longliners, a capacity limit and a reduction program would need to be established.

A starting point for the exercise of managing the capacity of longline vessels could be the [proposal](#) presented by the European Union at the 81<sup>st</sup> meeting of the IATTC in September 2010 on a list of active longline vessels and on freezing the capacity of the longline fleet at the levels recorded in 2008.

## 2.3. Third phase

The third phase consists of a review by the IATTC members and other participants in the fishery of the factors, *inter alia* economic incentives that contribute, directly or indirectly, to increasing fishing capacity excessively, with the aim of reducing or eliminating them.

The Commission should decide how to implement this phase. A paragraph expressing that commitment could be added to Resolution C-02-03, possibly after the current paragraph 13, reading as follows:

14. *The Commission shall evaluate the possible effects of all factors, among them the construction of vessels for export and economic incentives, that contribute, directly or indirectly, to increasing fishing capacity in the tuna fishery in the EPO, with a view to reducing and eliminating them.*

## 2.4. Other pending matters in the capacity plan

- a. **Operational procedures.** The Plan addresses the need to follow operational procedures for the transfer of vessels within the Regional Register, as well as those for the entry of new. For purse-seine vessels there is already a mechanism through Resolution C-02-03; still pending is the development of procedures for longline vessels.
- b. **Rights of coastal countries.** The Plan establishes that “in the implementation of the EPO Plan, the

right of coastal countries and CPCs with a longstanding and significant interest in the tuna fisheries in the EPO to develop and maintain their own tuna-fishing industries should be acknowledged and affirmed”. This general principle should be taken into account when establishing a plan for reducing the capacity of the purse-seine fleet or limiting the longline fleet.

### **3. POSSIBLE ACTIONS BY THE WORKING GROUP**

The working group should discuss and make recommendations to the Commission regarding the following pending aspects of the Plan:

1. Design a program for reducing the capacity of purse-seine vessels;
2. Establish a capacity limit for longline vessels;
3. How to implement the commitment to review economic and other incentives that might increase capacity.
4. Discuss and propose schemes for resolving the requests by coastal countries to develop their own purse-seine fleets, taking into account the balance between the expected economic benefit and the possible adverse consequences of developing such fleets.