

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE
11TH MEETING

Panama, Panama
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**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IATTC REGIONAL OBSERVER
PROGRAM FOR TRANSSHIPMENTS AT SEA**

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1. INTRODUCTION

The IATTC observer program to monitor transshipments at sea by carrier vessels in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) authorized to receive tuna and tuna-like species and sharks from large-scale tuna longline fishing vessels (LSTLFVs) is regulated by Resolution [C-22-03](#).

Paragraph 21 of Resolution C-22-03 establishes that “*Each year, the Director shall present a report on the implementation of this Resolution to the annual meeting of the Commission, which shall review compliance (...)*.” For the past four years, the report has been presented selectively in the different Committees of the Commission, with emphasis on the topics and issues specific to those Committees; thus, the Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF) can focus its attention on administrative and financial matters; the Compliance Committee (COR) on aspects related to this issue; and the Scientific Advisory Committee on the operational aspects of the program related to catch data, transshipments, areas, etc. The report that was presented to the SAC meeting in June is available here: [INF-C. Regional observer program for transshipments at sea](#).

In 2023 and 2024, the program was funded by the six IATTC Members that participate in it through their authorized large-scale tuna longline fishing vessels (LSTLFVs)—China, Japan, Korea, Panama, Chinese Taipei, and Vanuatu—in accordance with the agreed formula.

The three-year contract signed in 2022 with the *Marine Resources Assessment Group* (MRAG) consortium for the operation of the program covers the period 2023-2025.

2. 2009-2023 BUDGET

Table 1 shows the status of the program budget during 2009-2023.

In 2022, the participants were asked for contributions of US\$ 1,440,000 for the operation of the program in 2023, as approved by the 100th meeting of the IATTC held in August 2022 in Phoenix, Arizona, USA, which, when added to the surplus through 2022 of US\$ 559,281, results in a total of US\$ 1,999,281 for 2023. At the end of 2023, invoices were paid to MRAG for a total of US\$ 933,240.62, which allowed for a surplus at the end of 2023, and usable for 2024, of US\$ 1,066,040.

TABLE 1. Program budget, 2009-2023, in US\$					
	Contributions		Program costs	Surplus/ (deficit)	Accumulated surplus
	Participants	Others			
2009	741,346	-	698,801	42,545	42,545
2010	800,000	4,640 ¹	792,381	12,259	54,804
2011	946,971	6,060 ²	999,731	(46,700)	8,105
2012	1,006,060	6,060 ²	674,241	331,819	339,924
2013	1,000,000	-	771,083	228,917	568,841
2014	500,000	16,635 ³	760,950	(244,315)	324,526
2015	700,000	43,905 ⁴	867,175	(123,270)	201,254
2016	950,000	37,723 ⁴	1,056,479	(68,756)	132,498
2017	1,050,000 ⁵	----	1,159,644	(109,644)	22,854
2018	1,390,000 ⁶	----	1,297,585	92,415	115,269
2019	1,300,000	----	1,043,016	256,984	372,117
2020	1,305,000	----	1,421,486	(116,486)	255,631
2021	1,440,000	----	1,341,248	98,752	354,383
2022	1,440,000	----	1,235,102	204,898	559,281
2023	1,440,000	----	933,241	506,759	1,066,040

¹Peru; ²Belize; ³Includes Belize (US\$ 6,060), Indonesia (US\$ 1,485) and Panama (US\$ 9,090); ⁴Panama.
⁵Includes additional contributions totaling US\$ 100,000.
⁶Includes additional contributions totaling US\$ 290,000, agreed during 93rd IATTC meeting.

3. 2024 BUDGET

Based on 2023 expenses, during the 101st IATTC meeting in August 2023, held in Victoria, B.C., Canada, a budget of US\$ 1,100,000 was agreed to finance the program in 2024. Of that amount, a contribution of only US\$ 500,000 would be requested from the participants, allocated according to the agreed formula, and supplemented with funds from the accumulated surplus (*unused resources*) of the observer program for transshipments at sea. Accordingly, approximately US\$ 300,000 would be maintained as a contingency fund.

The costs of the program under a three-year contract signed with the MRAG Consortium and approved by the Commission during its 100th meeting are as follows (**Table 2**). These costs should not increase for the 3 years (2023-2025) of the MRAG contract.

TABLE 2. Costs for the three-year period 2023-2025, in US\$				
Period	Cost per day			
	At sea		Travel	
	≤ 2500 días	> 2500 días		
2020-2022	380	350	371	630
2023-2025	415	380	371	650

Table 3 shows the contributions payable by each participant to finance the 2024 budget and the payments made as of 1 July 2024.

TABLE 3. 2024 contributions, in US\$					
Participant	Total contribution	First instalment (50%); due 15 January	Paid	Second instalment (50%); due 15 June	Paid
China	315,310	157,655	✓	157,655	✓
Chinese Taipei	126,736	63,368	✓	63,368	✓
Japan	15,221	7,611	✓	7,610	✓
Korea	25,641	12,820	✓	12,821	✓
Panama*	0	0	✓	0	NA
Vanuatu	17,092	8,546	✓	8,546	✓
TOTAL	500,000	250,000		250,000	

*Panama's longline vessels did not make transshipments in 2023 and therefore, according to the agreed formula, they are not required to make contributions to the program.

Table 4 shows the program costs in 2023 and 2024 as of 30 June, in US\$.

TABLE 4. Program costs, 2023 and 2024 as of 30 June, in US\$						
Item	2023			2024 (as of 30 June)		
	Unit cost	Units paid	Cost	Unit cost	Units paid	Cost
Days at sea	415	1,900	788,500	415	829	344,035
Travel days	371	203	75,313	371	77	28,657
Training	630	0	0	630	0	0
Equipment, materials, travel	---		69,428			27,178
Total (US\$)			933,241			399,780

Table 5 summarizes the financial status of the program as of 30 June 2024.

TABLE 5. Financial situation of the program, in US\$, 2024	
Item	Amount US\$
1 January – 30 June	
First-semester contributions received	250,000
Second-semester contributions received	250,000
Surplus from previous years	1,066,013
Subtotal	1,566,013
Program expenditures, as of 30 June	399,780
Balance as of 30 June	1,166,233
Pending contributions 2024	0
Expected invoices for July - December	500,000
Balance as of 30 June + pending contributions - expected invoices (6 months remaining)	666,233

Experience shows that, in the last four months of the year, the number of observer and at-sea requests is usually higher than in the earlier months, so it is expected that the expenses for the second half of the year will be higher than those of the first half.

It is important that all program participants pay their outstanding contributions totaling US\$ 157,655, as shown in Table 5. Full payment of all required contributions will result in a surplus of approximately US\$ 666,233 at the end of 2024.

4. 2025 BUDGET

Based on the above estimates and what MRAG has indicated as anticipated expenses for 2025, the projected funding needs for 2025 would be approximately US\$ 1,000,000. If a surplus of approximately US\$ 666,000 at the end of 2024 were to be attained, approximately US\$ 800,000 in contributions would be required from the six participants of the program. This, plus the accumulated surplus and the expected expenses for 2025, would allow for a reasonable contingency fund of around US\$ 400,000.

5. ITEMS TO BE AGREED

In order to ensure that the Program can continue operating in an uninterrupted and integral manner, it is proposed that the Program participants approve the following:

- Adopt, for 2025, a budget of US\$ 1,000,000 on the understanding that the projections are correct. Only a contribution of US\$ 800,000 would be requested from the participants, allocated according to the agreed formula.
- Maintain a contingency fund of approximately US\$ 400,000 with the contributions and use of the surplus indicated above.
- Remind and urge participants that have not paid their 2024 contribution to do so as soon as possible or the service for longliners and purse-seiners flying their flag will be interrupted.