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COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE
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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 2024, the program was funded by five IATTC Members that participate in it through their authorized large-scale tuna longline fishing vessels (LSTLFVs)—China, Japan, Korea, Chinese Taipei, and Vanuatu—in accordance with the agreed formula. Panama also participates in the program, but in that year it only did so with carrier vessels receiving transshipments.

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 and thus ends in December.

2. 2009-2024 BUDGET

Table 1 shows the status of the program budget during 2009-2024.

In 2023, the participants were asked for contributions of US\$ 1,100,000 for the operation of the program in 2024. However, only US\$ 500,000 were requested from participants and allocated according to the formula approved at the 101st meeting of the IATTC held in August 2023 in Victoria, B.C., Canada. The funds to complete the budget of US\$ 1,100,000 were taken from the accumulated surplus through 2023 of \$1,066,040. At the end of 2024, invoices were paid to MRAG for a total of US\$ 876,433, which allowed for a surplus at the end of 2024, and usable for 2025, of US\$ 689,607.

TABLE 1. Program budget, 2009-2024, 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
2024	500,000	----	876,432.52	(376,432.52)	689,607.50
¹ Peru; ² Belize; ³ Includes Belize (US\$ 6,060), Indonesia (US\$ 1,485) and Panama (US\$ 9,090); ⁴ Panama.					
⁵ Includes additional contributions totaling US\$ 100,000.					
⁶ Includes additional contributions totaling US\$ 290,000, agreed during 93 rd IATTC meeting.					

3. 2025 BUDGET

Based on 2024 expenses, during the 102nd IATTC meeting in September 2024, held in Panama, a budget of US\$ 1,000,000 was agreed to finance the program in 2025. Of that amount, a contribution of only US\$ 800,000 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\$ 400,000 would be maintained as a contingency fund.

Table 2 shows the contributions payable by each participant to finance the 2025 budget and the payments made as of 10 July 2025.

TABLE 2. 2025 contributions, in US\$					
Participant	Total contribution	First instalment (50%); due 15 March	Paid	Second instalment (50%); due 15 June	Paid
China	572,672	286,336	✓	286,336	✓
Chinese Taipei	109,715	54,857	✓	54,858	✓
Japan	9,500	4,750	✓	4,750	✓
Korea	88,345	44,173	✓	44,172	✓
Panama*	0	0	✓	0	NA
Vanuatu	19,768	9,884	✓	9,884	✓
TOTAL	800,000	400,000		400,000	

*Panama's longline vessels did not make transshipments in 2024 and therefore, according to the agreed formula, they are not required to make contributions to the program.

Table 3 shows the program costs in 2024 and 2025 as of 30 June, in US\$.

TABLE 3. Program costs, 2024 and 2025 as of 30 June, in US\$						
Item	2024			2025 (as of 30 June)		
	Unit cost	Units paid	Cost	Unit cost	Units paid	Cost
Days at sea	415	1,832	760,280	415	857	355,655
Travel days	371	159	58,989	371	76	28,196
Training	630	0	0	630	0	0
Equipment, materials, travel	---		57,148.49			28,574.71
Total (US\$)			876,417.49			412,425.71

Table 4 summarizes the financial status of the program as of 30 June 2025.

TABLE 4. Financial situation of the program, in US\$, 2025	
Item	Amount US\$
1 January – 30 June	
First-semester contributions received	400,000
Second-semester contributions received	400,000
Surplus from previous years	689,607.50
Subtotal	1,489,607.50
Program expenditures, as of 30 June	412,425.71
Balance as of 30 June	1,077,181.80
Pending contributions 2025	0
Expected invoices for July - December	500,000
Balance as of 30 June + pending contributions - expected invoices (6 months remaining)	577,181.80

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.

According to the table above, a surplus of approximately US\$ 577,000 is expected by the end of 2025.

4. 2026 BUDGET

Based on the above estimates and what MRAG has indicated as anticipated expenses for 2026, the projected funding needs for 2026 would be approximately US\$ 1,110,000. Program costs were fixed from 2023 to 2025 due to the three-year contract with MRAG. However, the contract expires in December 2025, so a decision must be made about whether to renew it for one or three years. Renewing for three years would keep costs fixed for that period, while renewing for one year would allow costs to vary annually.

Table 5 below shows the costs for two previous periods, those that would result from signing a contract for only 2026 with possible annual increases, and those that would apply on a fixed basis for three years.

TABLE 5. Costs for the three-year period 2023-2025, in US\$				
Period	Cost per day			
	At sea		Travel	Training
	≤ 2500 days	> 2500 days		
2020-2022	380	350	371	630
2023-2025	415	380	371	630
2026 only	480	400		
	≤ 2000 days	> 2000 days		
2026-2028	480	400	400	630

If the expected surplus of approximately US\$ 577,000 were to be attained by the end of 2025, approximately US\$ 900,000 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\$ 370,000.

5. ITEMS TO BE AGREED

- (a) 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:
- 2026 budget: Adopt, for 2026, a budget of US\$ 1,100,000 on the understanding that the projections are correct. Only a contribution of US\$ 900,000 would be requested from the participants, allocated according to the agreed formula.
 - Contingency fund: Maintain a contingency fund of approximately US\$ 370,000 with the contributions and use of the surplus indicated above.
- (b) Regarding the contract with MRAG, which ends at the end of this year, there are two options, as described above. Participants in the program must decide which option is more convenient.
- Sign a three-year contract with fixed costs during that period, after the initial increase indicated and a reduction in cost per day beyond 2,000 days.
 - Sign a contract for only 2026 with the same increase and a reduction in cost per day beyond 2,500 days.

The second option would involve the following:

- Developing new Terms of Reference to hire the appropriate entity for 2027 and beyond.
- Conducting a bidding process in 2026 with the possibility of MRAG participating. The goal would be to contract the most qualified entity offering the best quality/price ratio.