

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

2ND WORKSHOP OF AN ELECTRONIC MONITORING SYSTEM (EMS) IN THE EPO: INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE, GOALS AND SCOPE OF THE EMS

(by videoconference)

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DOCUMENT EMS-02-01

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF AN EMS IN THE EPO

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

As requested by the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) at its 10th meeting (2019) in its Recommendation 3.1, which was endorsed by the Commission, and in compliance with Resolution [C-19-08](#), paragraphs 9 and 10, the staff prepared, and subsequently presented at the 11th meeting of the SAC, Document [SAC-11-10](#) “An electronic monitoring system for the tuna fisheries in the eastern Pacific Ocean: Objectives and Standards”.

That document contained information on the potential of an Electronic Monitoring System (EMS), a description of its potential components, a comprehensive evaluation of the minimum standards for these components, and the actions that would be required for its implementation.

On that basis, Document [EMS-01-01](#), which was submitted to the [1st Workshop on Implementation of an Electronic Monitoring System](#), held in April 2021, included several recommendations made by the staff on the minimum standards and actions to be agreed upon to successfully implement an EMS for tuna fisheries in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO).

As complement to these recommendations, Document [EMS-01-02](#) (Rev.) proposed a workplan, consisting in the holding of several workshops that would focus on the various EMS components and subcomponents and analyze them in a logical and chronological order. At its 98th meeting, held in August 2021, the Commission adopted Resolution [C-21-02](#), which established the Terms of Reference for these workshops.

In accordance with the agreed workplan, this 2nd workshop is being held to address a number of organizational issues relating to the institutional structure as well as to the goals and the scope of an EMS for tuna fisheries in the EPO. The conclusions and recommendations reached at this workshop will necessarily impact and guide the exploration of other objectives and actions to be considered in future workshops (e.g., EM data to be generated, EM review rate, EM coverage).

The purpose of this document is to focus on the first category of these issues, that is, the institutional and functional components of the EMS in the EPO.

2. OVERVIEW OF INSTITUTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Structure of the EMS Program

An institutional framework refers to both an institution or a cluster of institutions and the way they operate, including their relationships and interactions. In the case of the contemplated EMS scheme, the overarching institutional framework would be the IATTC itself. This is reflected in the first recommendation that was put forward by the IATTC staff in Document [EMS-01-01](#), as reproduced below and as illustrated in [Figure 1](#).

Establish a single, unified EMS Program for the EPO following the International Dolphin Conservation Program (IDCP) model, in which databases, standards, procedures and protocols are standardized across all components/individual programs and are compatible with existing IDCP and IATTC practices.

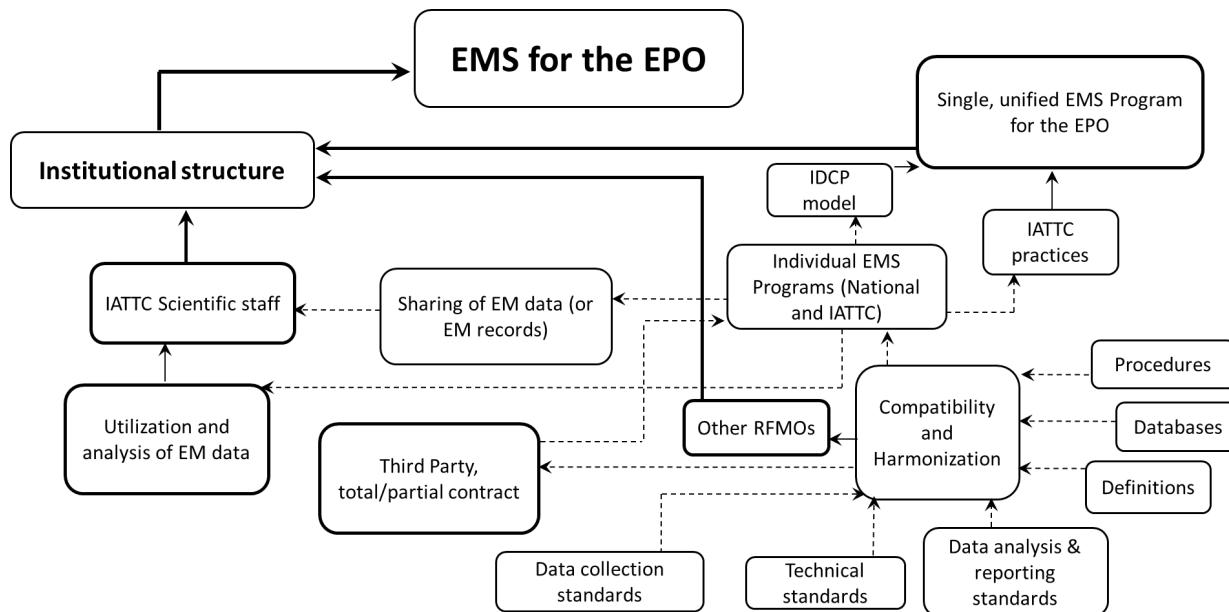


Figure 1. EPO EMS institutional structure framework. Relationship and interaction of its components.

However, within that overall framework, and notwithstanding the unity and uniformity that it would provide, basically three kinds of institutional approaches may be contemplated and should be discussed by the participants in the workshop:

- a centralized approach with a single body, either the IATTC itself through its Secretariat or a selected third party;
- a cluster of national bodies/agencies of participating CPCs;
- a hybrid system, with a central body interacting with the different national bodies/agencies.

When considering this issue, it should be recalled that the AIDCP model itself offers an example and a precedent of a hybrid system, not only at the level of the general relationship between the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) and the other bodies established by the Agreement, on the one hand, and the relevant national authorities and agencies on the other, but also at the level of the observer program, which includes not only the centralized AIDCP/IATTC program but also various national programs which together constitute the AIDCP On-Board Observer Program.

Another related element that should be considered by the participants in the workshop is the question of the ways in which the EMS program would be inserted in the existing institutional structure, both at the level of the IATTC and at the national level. For instance, would it require the establishment of new specific bodies or structures or only the corresponding broadening of all the functions of the present ones?

Rules and procedures: standardization and compatibility

- a. Whatever be the approach that would be adopted, one of those three above described or another one not yet defined, the second subcomponent of the institutional framework is the set of rules and procedures that would govern the functioning of the scheme.

Without prejudging the comments and suggestions to be made by the participants in the workshop, it may be recognized from the start that it would be essential, as couched in the recommendation quoted above, to ensure, as a principle, a general standardization and compatibility with the existing rules, standards and practices within the IATTC and the IDCP.

The need for such standardization and compatibility would be most acute in the case of a hybrid approach, and particularly if some institutional components at the national level would choose in turn to delegate the implementation of the scheme to a third party. Hence, the recommendation that was included in Document [EMS-01-01](#), as follows:

Agree that national EMS programs that may be set up to complement the IATTC EMS Program, can be fully or partially contracted out to third parties, but only if they apply the common standards, protocols, procedures, and databases of the overarching EPO EMS Program.

Standardization and compatibility in terms of the equipment to be used and the tasks performed by service providers, among others, are also essential elements for the development of a unified EMS program in the EPO. The best course of action in this respect should be considered and discussed among the participants in future workshops.

- b. A complementary issue to be considered is the question compatibility or harmonization with the electronic monitoring schemes of other RFMOs and RFBs, as referred to in the second recommendation put forward by the IATTC staff in Document [EMS-01-01](#), as follows:

To the extent practical, seek to ensure harmonization and compatibility of EPO EMS with WCPFC EMS procedures and standards among others to facilitate cooperation and exchange of information as appropriate and necessary between the two organizations.

The specific reference made to the WCPFC reflects the need for some kind of priority or hierarchy when considering which other EMS scheme or RFMO/RFB on which the participants should reflect, taking into account, for instance, the geographical and thematic areas of competence of these organizations. For similar reasons, the Commission might also give priority to coordination with SPRFMO and other fisheries organizations of the region and subregion.

This is desirable, not only because of the convenience, if not need, to have a common ground when sharing the data generated by electronic monitoring between the different organizations and their affiliated institutions and agencies, but also in order to optimize the use of the EM equipment installed on board the vessels, to allow its utilization when these vessels would operate during the lifetime of that equipment under the jurisdiction of various RFMOs or entities.

Data: integration, access and sharing

EM records must be processed and analyzed by human personnel (perhaps eventually supplemented by artificial intelligence) to generate EM data that will be used in pursuit of the agreed goals. This task of reviewing EM records will require a significant number of qualified people with special training similar to that of onboard observers. These analysts could be employed by the Commission, by the CPCs according to national or regional programs, by a third-party service providers or a combination thereof.

With regards to the data to be generated and its sharing, ensuring the single and unified character of the EMS to be established in the EPO calls for recognition as a fundamental principle that all EM data will be fully shared with the IATTC and its staff and stored as well as integrated and utilized by it as appropriate, as expressed in other two of the recommendations put forward by the IATTC staff in Document [EMS-01-01](#) as follows:

Agree that all EM data resulting from national EMS programs (and, if required for research purposes, the underlying EM records) be shared with the IATTC staff.

Task the IATTC staff with coordinating the EPO EMS and integrating all derived EM data for their future utilization and analysis, as appropriate.

In addition, beside the IATTC staff and the flag States that would also have full and direct access to the EM data related to the fishing activities of their respective vessels, the question of who should be allowed to have access to that data and under which conditions (e.g., the application of the rules of confidentiality already adopted by the Commission or the development of new ones), should also be considered and discussed by the participants in the workshop.

Other considerations

Finally, participants should keep in mind that there are other aspects closely linked to the institutional framework of the EMS. Among these is the question of the financial and other resources needed to implement the scheme (e.g., the technical and logistical support, commensurate to the amount of data to be stored once the question of such storage has been analyzed and decided). Procedures also need to be defined and followed to ensure an optimal implementation of the scheme (such as sampling configuration and rate, the possible need to adapt and develop the existing set of rules on confidentiality, etc.), but that these aspects will be analyzed and discussed during future workshops in accordance with the workplan that was adopted by the Commission. For example, it can be recalled that the workshop to discuss the financial considerations is preliminarily scheduled for spring 2023, and the workshops to discuss the standards that will govern the system are scheduled for fall 2023 and the year 2024 ([EMS-01-02 Rev.](#)).

3. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE EMS INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Without questioning the need for ensuring the unity and coherence of the EMS in the EPO, participants in the workshop should consider the possible consequences and effects on the institutional framework of the application of the scheme to very differentiated components of the fishing fleet in the EPO and related activities. In Document [EMS-02-02](#) on goals and scope of an EMS in the EPO, participants have been invited to consider that such scope would cover all tuna purse-seine vessels whatever their size, all longline vessels except those of less than 12 m length overall and using manually operated fishing gear, as well as all operations of transshipments at sea. Although it may be expected that most of the considerations made in the previous section would apply rather equally to these three categories, participants in the workshop should reflect upon aspects of the EMS institutional framework that might benefit from being treated more specifically, and how to apply such a distinctive approach.