

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

83RD MEETING

La Jolla, California (USA)

25-29 June 2012

PROPOSAL IATTC-83 G-1

SUBMITTED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

IATTC RESOLUTION ON THE BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Goal: this proposal seeks to strengthen the IATTC process of scientific advice formulation, developing the availability of sound data and improving communication between the IATTC Scientific Staff, the Scientific Advisory Committee and other sources of expertise

It also establishes the principle of preserving and further promoting the professional independence and excellence of the Scientific Advisory Committee and the IATTC Scientific Staff by requiring the drafting of a Code of Conduct, the strengthening of peer-review mechanisms, the availability of existing information, funding for research and the definition of rules applicable to the provision of scientific advice from the IATTC Scientific Staff and the Scientific Advisory Committee. It also ensures that the respective roles and functions of the IATTC Scientific Staff and the Scientific Advisory Committee are in line with the Antigua Convention.

Rationale: sound scientific advice is an essential element for the conservation and management of tuna and tuna-like species in RFMOs. Professional independence and excellence, peer-review, data availability, improved management of the Scientific Advisory Committee and effective participation of experts play, including external ones, a key role in the development of the scientific advice.

Background: currently IATTC does not have detailed specific rules governing best available science availability and management.

IATTC RESOLUTION ON THE BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE

The Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC),

RECOGNIZING the importance of sound scientific advice as the centre piece for the conservation and management of tuna and tuna-like species in the area of competence of the IATTC in line with international law and the information needs of the IATTC;

AWARE that the availability of adequate scientific information is fundamental to carrying out the objectives of the Antigua Convention laid down in its Article II;

NOTING the role of the Scientific Staff;

RECOGNIZING the importance of the Scientific Advisory Committee in revising any scientific plans, proposals, research programme of the Commission as well as any assessment, analyse, research, work or recommendation prepared by the Scientific Staff before consideration by the Commission as laid down in Annex IV of the Antigua Convention;

RECOGNIZING the limited financial resources of developing coastal States and wishing to assist in building their scientific capacity;

ACKNOWLEDGING the need to improve the availability and quality of data and analysis used for the provision of scientific advice, including on bycatch and discards;

BUILDING on the deliberations and recommendations of the Kobe process;

Agrees to:

1. Take all measures which would be appropriate:
 - i. To improve the communication between CPCs, the IATTC, the Scientific Advisory Committee and the Scientific Staff by enabling a continuous dialogue, for example, through the use of electronic discussion groups and tele-/video conferencing;
 - ii. To improve the collection and submission of data to the IATTC, including on bycatches;
 - iii. To support research programs and projects relevant to the information needs of the IATTC;
 - iv. To facilitate participation in meetings of the Scientific Advisory Committee, its Working Groups as well as in other relevant scientific bodies of scientists with suitable scientific qualifications;
 - v. To contribute to the training of scientific researchers, including young scientists.
2. Preserve and promote the professional independence and excellence of the Scientific Staff, the Scientific Advisory Committee and its Working Groups, and the relevance of their work to the information needs of the IATTC, by:
 - i. Enhancing the participation of scientists in meetings of the Scientific Advisory Committee and its Working Groups, including scientists involved in other tuna RFMOs and other relevant scientific bodies;
 - ii. Drafting a code of conduct for the Scientific Staff, the Scientific Advisory Committee and its Working Groups, for adoption by the IATTC. For this purpose, the Scientific Advisory Committee and the Scientific Staff may develop rules to avoid conflict of interests, to ensure the quality, relevance and professional independence of scientific activities and, where applicable, to maintain the confidentiality of the data used;
 - iii. Drafting a strategic plan for the Scientific Staff, the Scientific Advisory Committee and its Working Groups for adoption by the IATTC. The strategic plan shall be used to guide the work of the Scientific Advisory Committee, its Working Groups and the Scientific Staff in assisting the IATTC to effectively achieve its mandate.
 - iv. Ensuring that relevant, professionally independent and objective scientific advice, based on the best available and peer-reviewed scientific analysis, is presented by the Scientific

Advisory Committee and the Scientific Staff to the IATTC;

- v. Ensuring that sources and history of revisions of all documents submitted to and assessed by the Scientific Advisory Committee, its Working Groups and the Scientific Staff are fully documented;
 - vi. Providing clear, transparent, and standardized formats for the provision of advice to the IATTC;
 - vii. Providing for well-defined rules for formulating scientific advice to the IATTC, reflecting different views while striving for consensus, to promote consistency and transparency;
 - viii. Ensuring that the key role of the Scientific Advisory Committee in reviewing the plans, proposals and research programs of the Commission, as well as reviewing any relevant assessments, analyses, research or work, as well as recommendations prepared for the Commission by its Scientific Staff prior to consideration of such recommendations by the Commission as established by Annex IV Antigua Convention is respected;
3. Strengthen peer review mechanisms within the Scientific Advisory Committee and the Scientific Staff by participation of invited experts (e.g. from other RFMOs or from academia) in the Scientific Advisory Committee and Scientific Staff activities. These experts shall be subject to the data confidentiality rules and procedures currently applicable in the IATTC.
 4. Continue to support the Scientific Advisory Committee's and Scientific Staff initiatives to publish its scientific findings in the scientific peer-reviewed academic literature.
 5. With the aim of meeting the above-mentioned objectives, consider broadening financial support and mechanisms, including *inter alia*, contributing to the "Meeting Participation Fund" for Developing IATTC Contracting Parties, for the purpose of the implementation of this Resolution, in particular to:
 - i. Contribute to the scientific capacity building of the developing CPCs and to enhance their effective participation in the work of the Scientific Advisory Committee and its Working Groups;
 - ii. Provide necessary resources for the Scientific Advisory Committee, its Working Groups and the Scientific Staff, including consideration of alternative funding models for the commissioning of research.