

AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM
42ND MEETING OF THE PARTIES

(by videoconference)
17 August 2021

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

AGENDA

	Documents
1. Opening of the meeting*.	
2. Election of Chairman	
3. Adoption of the agenda	
4. Approval of the Minutes of the 41 st Meeting of the Parties	AIDCP 41-Draft Minutes
5. AIDCP Budget	AIDCP-42-01
6. Report of the 32 nd meeting of the Working Group to promote and publicize the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System	
7. Report of the 67 th meeting of the International Review Panel (IRP)	
8. Other business	
9. Place and date of next meeting	
10. Adjournment	

* Including the adoption of *ad hoc* rules and arrangements for the 42nd meeting only.

APPENDICES

1. List of attendees

The 42nd Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) was held by videoconference on 17 August 2021.

1. Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened by Amb. Jean-François Pulvenis, Director (*ad interim*) of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), which provides the technical Secretariat for the AIDCP.

2. Election of Chairman

Mr. Alvin Delgado, of Venezuela, who was elected Chairman of the meeting, expressed his hope that the meeting would be productive in spite of the exceptional situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chairman gave the floor to the delegations of the Parties and could note that there was a quorum to hold the meeting with the participation of 11 of the 16 Parties of the AIDCP: Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, United States, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, and the European Union.

3. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was approved as presented and the Chairman informed that an item would be included under "Other business" to address the AIDCP rules of operation.

4. Approval of the minutes of the 41st Meeting of the Parties

The minutes of the 41st Meeting of the Parties were approved without changes.

5. AIDCP Budget

Ms. Nora Roa, of the Secretariat, presented Document [AIDCP-42-01 AIDCP budget abstract](#). She reported on the result of the 2020 financial activity, reflecting a surplus of US\$ 451,284, the projected budget for 2021 and the recommended budget for 2022.

Additionally, this surplus was added to the 2019 surplus of US\$ 2,144,071, for a total of US\$ 2,595,355. US\$207,269 were set aside for distribution to national programs, resulting in a surplus of US\$2,388,086 as of 31 December.

It was reported that, as of 31 July 2021, there were outstanding vessel assessments for US\$ 616,723. These arrears include 1 vessel from Ecuador, 2 from Nicaragua, 1 from Panama, and 9 from Venezuela.

Nicaragua, after requesting a correction in the table of vessels in arrears, pointed out that governments should be notified in advance when there are arrears so that payments can be settled before the meetings. Nicaragua also requested that, when there are payment arrangements between the Secretariat and the vessel owners, the respective governments' endorsement or agreement be notified and obtained. The Secretariat recognized that the governments are responsible for the payments to the AIDCP and would therefore ensure in the future that governments approve any possible payment arrangements that are established pragmatically with vessel owners.

Venezuela reported that the vessels *Albamar I* and *Tunapuy* have had mechanical problems and have not been operating, so they have had trouble obtaining the resources to pay their financial contributions, but they were still required to make contributions to the program. The rest of the 7 vessels in arrears are in the process of paying. Ecuador reported that they are making arrangements for the outstanding payment of the vessel *Vicente*.

The United States mentioned that in some cases the delays in payments were due to the fact that the vessels were listed as active in the Register even though they were not fishing, so it would make sense to either remove them from the Register.

The Director stated that removing the vessel from the register when it is not operating so as not to increase its debts to the program may be one solution, but another is to classify it as inactive, since there is a considerable difference in payment if it is registered as active (US\$ 14.95 per m³ of well volume) or inactive (US\$ 1 per m³).

Regarding the existing surplus, Colombia recalled that Resolution A-19-01 states that *"the AIDCP allocate to the observer programs 10% of the surplus as of 31 December 2018, which is indicated in the sixth paragraph of the preamble, to be used to re-equip the programs, with a goal to further improve their operations, which was not previously possible due to financial challenges within the programs."*

The Chairman reported that the heads of the national programs must meet to decide on how to use this resource, so as soon as this meeting takes place, the Parties will be notified.

Several ideas on how to use the program's surplus were presented, including the following:

- a) Dolphin mother/calf separation study

Mexico recalled that the proposal to support with these resources a study on the separation of dolphin mother/calf during the chase while conducting fishing operations was pending, and that new technologies would allow to make progress the analysis and consequences of this situation, since it is very difficult to assess them from aboard the vessel and with cameras.

The Director thanked Mexico for its interest in the study project and highlighted the close contacts with that country for its implementation, which has been delayed mainly due to the pandemic. The Chairman suggested that a document be presented for the next meeting in October with an update on the work, as well as a proposal to use surplus funds.

Ecuador noted that it greatly appreciated Mexico's proposal, however, given the economic consequences of the pandemic, priority should be given to examining how the surplus could be used to reduce the burden of fleet expenses to cover the costs of the observer program, as Colombia had already mentioned. Ecuador stressed that Mexico's proposal should be approved by all Parties.

b) Increased salaries for observers of the program

The United States and the European Union recalled that the option of supporting the increase in observer remunerations with the surplus had been also raised, recognizing that their work is an essential function for data collection and decision making in the management of the tuna fishery in the EPO, in addition to the fact that the remuneration level has deteriorated year after year due to the lack of raises, but there have been increases in the cost of living.

The Chairman mentioned that for his part he fully agreed that the observers' remuneration should be increased, but not with the surplus due to the exceptional and non-permanent nature of this resource. The Director recalled that the level of remuneration of AIDCP observers is very low compared to other programs and other regional fisheries management organizations.

Development of incentives and additional measures for further reduction of incidental dolphin mortality. The European Union disagreed with the comments that the dolphin conservation program has been a success. It stressed that the incidental mortality was 689 dolphins in 2020 and that this number is still too high. For this reason, additional measures should be explored to further reduce this level of mortality. The European Union urged the Secretariat to prepare a document with resources from the surplus that would allow the identification and analysis of incentives and/or additional measures to reduce mortality.

6. Report of the 32nd meeting of the Working Group to promote and publicize the AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System

The Chair of the working group, Mr. Bernal Chavarría, reported that the group agreed to recommend to the AIDCP Parties that "*Subject to the availability of the AIDCP budget, develop studies and seminars to promote the work, progress and development of scientific activities that are executed within the framework of the AIDCP.*"

This recommendation was approved by the Parties.

7. Report of the 67th meeting of the International Review Panel (IRP)

Mr. Enrique de la Vega, in his capacity as the President of the IRP, reported that the Panel issued the following recommendations, which were approved by the Meeting of the Parties:

- 1) Review the DML allocation system, as well as the incentives granted to further reduce incidental dolphin mortality.
- 2) Refer to the Parties the four cases of fishing trips with a captain NOT included in the list of qualified captains, together with the cases that are automatically identified and sent to the Parties.
- 3) Case 2019-448, corresponding to Ecuador, will be closed once Ecuador sends the official request in writing.
- 4) That the AIDCP review the cases of trips that were exempted from carrying an observer due to COVID-19 and in which the logbook was not submitted, as established in the guidelines for granting the exemption.

Ecuador notified that it had already sent the corresponding communication mentioned in point 3, in order to close case 2019-448, which was confirmed by the Secretariat.

Regarding item 4, the Chairman noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has not concluded and that this made it

necessary to extend the period of validity of the COVID 19 Pandemic Exception Procedure for the Operation of On-Board Observers at least until 31 December 2021.

The United States requested that, since the procedure was adopted in both the IATTC and the AIDCP, both bodies should be informed of the vessels' compliance with the conditions established for granting the exemptions, as well as ensuring that the possible extension of the procedure is approved in both bodies.

The Secretariat commented that it would ensure that there is agreement for the extension, as well as that the development of and compliance with the provisions of the exemption agreement be reported to both the IATTC and AIDCP.

8. Other business

The Chairman noted that the issue of the AIDCP rules of operation, which has been discussed at previous meetings, was pending. He reported that Colombia had prepared a draft on which further work had been done and that a text would be circulated as soon as possible so that progress could be made regarding development and approval of these rules.

9. Place and date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held in October on dates to be determined.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on 17 August 2021 at 10:10 AM San Diego time.