

Spanish tuna sector presents fishery improvement project at UN

The **Organisation of Associated Producers of Large Tuna Freezer Vessels (OPAGAC)** will present its business model to set a worldwide sustainable tuna fishing standard today at the UN within the Review Conference of the New York Agreement on fishing for highly migratory species and shared stocks. This fishery improvement project (FIP) is the result of an agreement signed earlier this year between OPAGAC and WWF, organisations that form its executive committee.

The proposal of the Spanish tuna organisation is based on three main factors: improving RFOs (Regional Fisheries Organisations) management, the adoption of concrete measures in the practice of tuna purse seine mode to ensure the sustainability of tropical tunas and the lower impact of this fishing gear on the ecosystem, and improving governance from the coastal countries, including the fight against illegal fishing.

Referring to the second of these three major axes of the plan, OPAGAC has already invested more than EUR 2 million in the adoption of measures in the fleet it represents and expects to reach an investment volume of EUR 5 million while the project lasts. It must be noted that the organisation represents more than 40 purse seiners with a production of 300,000 tonnes per year (6 per cent of world catches), in operations carried out in the Atlantic, Indian and Western and Eastern Pacific oceans.

OPAGAC began designing this project two years ago to improve fishery that, in addition to its executive committee, includes a technical committee composed of experts from each organisation and whose work is supervised by an independent consultant and an advisory committee consisting of 15 members from NGOs, governments, international agencies and scientific institutions, to which the FIP's Action Plan is submitted.

To date, the investments made by OPAGAC fleet unilaterally have focused on research and development of non-entangling fish aggregating devices (FADs) to replace the old ones, the preparation and incorporation of more than 50 observers on board, the formation of more than 350 crew members and the verification of all the changes that the adoption of these measures require onboard from [AZTI](#), a centre that is expert in marine technology innovation and food belonging to the Tecnalía corporation.

OPEGAC stresses that the results obtained in the FADs innovation projects are decisively contributing to the scientific discussions on these devices and the implementation of appropriate management measures globally in all these Regional Fisheries Organisations (RFOs).

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