



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
EIGHTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**

ELECTRONIC MEETING
10-18 August 2022

Japan Trust Fund Status Report 2022

WCPFC-SC18-2022/ RP-JTF-01 (Rev.01)
30 July 2022

Cook Islands, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Secretariat

Introduction

The majority of the WCPFC Members are developing states including Small Island Developing States (SIDS), whose capacities to implement conservation and management measures are limited and would benefit from strengthened capacity. The WCPFC Project on Capacity Building in Fisheries Statistics, Regulations and Enforcement for SIDS originated from a Japanese funding proposal to the WCPFC made in December 2005, also known as the Japan Trust Fund (JTF). The primary objective of this project is to support capacity building of the developing countries of the WCPFC members, especially SIDS. The initial phase of the project was for 5 years starting from 2006 to 2011 with a total available funding of approximately USD 2 million.

Given the success of and general support for the project in its first 5-year phase, the Fisheries Agency of Japan sought and successfully secured a budget of around USD 2 million in total, for the second 5-year phase. The objectives and terms of reference for the second phase were similar to the previous phase, with an emphasis on enforcement and compliance. In 2016 the Japanese government granted an extension of one year to the second phase, supporting projects in 2017, which was further extended to include another year, 2018.

In 2019, the Japanese Fisheries Agency approved a third phase for the JTF retaining the same objectives and terms of reference for another 5 years. This third phase program is the same as the previous phases in principle with an emphasis on a new fisheries management procedure including harvest strategy and a new monitoring technology related project. In 2021, there were six (6) successful proposals supported by JTF with a budget allocation of USD 232,821.00. The same funding level was made available for the 2022 JTF (USD 232,821.00). After deduction of the 7.5% administrative fee of USD 17,461.58, the balance available for 2022 projects amounts to USD 215,359.42. Six (6) proposals were received by 22nd December 2021 and a summary of 2022 approved projects, and their status are in found in *Annex I* to this report.

All JTF projects conducted are found on the WCPFC website at <https://www.wcpfc.int/doc/jtf-summary-2022/japan-trust-fund-summary-projects-2012-date>. Brief country reports of completed JTF projects in 2021 are found in [Japan Trust Fund Annual Report 2022](#). While the status reports for

carried-over projects from previous years are detailed in *Annex 2* and brief reports on JTF projects completed in 1st quarter of 2022 are found in *Annex 3* of this report.

In general, the new and carried over approved projects funded by the JTF are mainly for SIDS seeking assistance on building their capacities related to data collection especially in these new emerging technologies such as electronic reporting and electronic monitoring (ER and EM) which will eventually assist in the harvest strategy work being developed by WCPFC.

Japan Trust Fund – Objectives and Expected Activities

The objectives and expected activities for the JTF contained in the Consolidated Project Document (2019), which provides guidelines for the Steering Committee to select project proposals. They may be conveniently summarized as follow:

“The basic objectives of this project are, within the purview of WCPFC, to assist SIDS Members, and other developing States Members as appropriate, in improving their capacities in:

- a. *Data collection and reporting of their fisheries and associated activities, in particular, those required by WCPFC, and*
- b. *Establishment of fisheries regulation and its effective enforcement, in particular, the conservation and management measures adopted by WCPFC*

In order to pursue these objectives, following activities may be implemented under the Project:

- a. *Data collection and reporting of their fisheries and associated activities, in particular, those required by WCPFC:*
 - *identify and examine the source of uncertainty in data collection and reporting;*
 - *develop and implement capacity-building programs to improve fisheries data collection and reporting;*
 - *assist if necessary WCPFC to facilitate appropriate opportunities (e.g., meetings, workshops) to consider improved data collection and reporting of their fisheries by developing States and their participation in the Commission.*
- b. *Establishment of fisheries regulation and its effective monitoring, control and enforcement, in particular, the requirements by WCPFC*
 - *review enforcement and monitoring mechanisms in developing states Members in terms of legal, institutional and technical aspects and identify opportunities for strengthening these areas;*
 - *develop and implement capacity-building programs to improve fisheries monitoring regulation and enforcement by developing states members;*
 - *assist if necessary WCPFC to hold appropriate opportunities to consider improved enforcement by developing States under their jurisdiction and through their participation in the Commission.”*

Annex 1. Status of Approved Projects for 2022 (Year 4, Phase 3 Program)

	CCM	Contact Person	Title	Objectives	Approved Budget (in USD)
A	Solomon Islands	Mr. Derrick Tagosia Electronic Reporting and Monitoring Coordinator Email: DTagosia@fisheries.gov.sb Phone: +677 39143/30264	Training and supporting Solomon Islands Electronic Monitoring (EM) Analysts to continue analyzing EM records from EM systems installed in Longline fishing vessels	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.To provide financial support for our EM Analysts to continue analyzing our EM records from April to December 2022. 2.To strengthen MCS processes through EM systems on Longline fishing vessels, especially in this time where human observer coverage on fishing vessels is suspended. 3.To analyze and provide EM data to the management and other national and regional stakeholders for timely decision making. 	47,226.82
<p><u>Status:</u></p> <p>Acknowledging that monitoring of fishing activities and operations of longline fishing vessels remains a big challenge to Solomon Islands, the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) viewed that electronic monitoring (EM) is the solution to these challenges of monitoring longline fishing vessels activities and operations. As EM is an emerging management tool in tuna fisheries monitoring utilizing new available technologies in gathering data that will help in verification and validation of fisheries' logbook information, leading to enhanced data, which will address data gaps in the longline fishing vessels, support fisheries management, and help verify & monitor implementation of CMMs. In WCPFC, EM data could be a source of independent and impartial data which will supplement the ROP and other data sources, that will eventually support the harvest strategy work that is currently being develop. In this regard, the support provided to Solomon Islands is valuable in building its capacity in this new monitoring technologies and evolving fisheries management approach (e.g., harvest strategy).</p> <p>This 2nd phase of the Solomon Islands proposal is seeking financial support for their EM analysts to continue analyzing their EM records from April to December 2022. Funds for this project was transferred in April 2022. Activities of this project are ongoing, but the main challenge that Solomon Islands is facing, would be when boats unload in other ports especially in Fiji. Solomon Islands have to wait for months for the hard drives of vessels to arrive at Honiara for analysis. Solomon Islands is working on a proposed solution, that is to setup an online cloud-based storage especially in Fiji, so that data can be uploaded onto, and can be downloaded at Solomon Islands Data Analysis Center. Currently, Solomon Islands is waiting for about 17 hard drives (this week) from Fiji via DHL, hopefully with borders open on July 1, flights will be frequent and hard drive/s will come on time for Solomon Islands analysts to analyze EM records. Another challenge is the delay of funds to reach the Ministry's account for us to raise payments to start our activities. Currently, Solomon Islands is still waiting for CBSI to transfer the funds to the Ministry's account.</p>					
B	Solomon Islands	Mr. Derrick Tagosia Electronic Reporting and Monitoring Coordinator Email: DTagosia@fisheries.gov.sb Phone: +677 39143/30264	Support to Solomon Islands National Electronic Monitoring (EM) Policy Consultations, Drafting and Launching	To provide financial support for Solomon Islands National Longline EM Policy internal and external consultations with the industries and stakeholders.	48,247.50
<p><u>Status:</u></p>					

Solomon Islands recognize that monitoring of fishing activities and operations of fishing vessels remains a big challenge, especially for the longline fishing vessels, thus, the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) viewed that electronic monitoring (EM) is the solution to these challenges of monitoring longline fishing vessels activities and operations. As EM is an emerging management tool in tuna fisheries monitoring utilizing new available technologies in gathering data that will help in verification and validation of fisheries' logbook information, leading to enhanced data, which will support improved fisheries management and help verify and monitor implementation of CMMs. In WCPFC, EM data could be a source of independent and impartial data which will supplement the ROP and other data sources, that will eventually support the harvest strategy work that is currently being develop. In this regard, the support provided to Solomon Islands for this project is essential to guide Solomon Islands EM program implementations.

This project requested financial support for Solomon Islands Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) to hold internal and external consultations with the longline industries, to put together a Solomon Islands National Longline EM Policy by the end of 2022 and to guide Solomon Islands EM program implementations. Funds for this project was transferred in April 2022. Activities of this project are ongoing. The main challenge is the delay of funds from CBSI to the Ministry's account. Currently, MFMR is still waiting for the funds to be transferred from CBSI to the Ministry.

C	Tonga	<p>Dr. Tuikolongahau Halafihi <i>CEO for Fisheries</i> Email: supi64t@gmail.com; ceo@tongafish.gov.to</p> <p>Mr. Poasi Ngaluafe <i>Head of Fisheries Science Division</i> Email: poasi.ngaluafe@tongafish.gov.to</p> <p>Ms. Lavinia Vaipuna, <i>Head of Offshore Section</i> Email: lavinia@tongafish.gov.to</p>	Support and maintain high level data collection and to improve management of tuna fisheries in Tonga, as well as providing timely feedback through monitoring programs on conservation of tuna species (<i>Port Sampling</i>)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To fund tuna data collection (port sampling) over one full calendar year (2022) in Tonga. 2. To fund artisanal tuna data collection over one full calendar year (2022) in Tonga. 3. To empower staff capacity to enable collection of data and enter such data into the database. 4. To conduct E-Reporting training of all new tuna vessel masters, port samplers and artisanal data officers. 5. To improve management and provide awareness of data collection. 	55,326.00
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Status:

Noting that fishery-dependent data are integral to sustainable fisheries management including the emerging harvest strategy framework being developed by WCPFC. Recent developments in technology available to collect, manage and analyze fishery-relevant data provide a suite of possible solutions to update and modernize fisheries data systems and greatly expand data collection and analysis including electronic reporting (ER). Tonga recognizes the valuable support provided by the JTF, and the available e-reporting tools (e.g. ONBOARD, ONSHORE, TAILS, OLLO) that are important in supporting and maintaining high level data collection in Tonga, as well as providing timely feedback to fisheries managers for the sustainable management and conservation of tuna resources. Tonga also acknowledges that these data collection initiatives are essential in the ongoing harvest strategy work being develop in WCPFC.

Funds for this Project have been transferred in April 2022, and tuna data collection activities are ongoing. The ER component of the Project was beneficial during the COVID-19 lockdown.

D	Tonga	<p>Dr Tuikolongahau Halafihi <i>CEO for Fisheries</i> Email:</p>	Capacity building and strengthening of Tonga National Observer Program	This project seeks to strengthen Tonga's national observer program by:	37,800.00
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		ceo@tongafish.gov.to Mele To'a 'Atuekaho Deputy CEO, Compliance Division meletoaatuekaho@gmail.com Kalo Manuopangai Observer Coordinator kmanuopangai@gmail.com		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building capacity of senior observers, who are also certified debriefers and creating a career path for these observers by utilizing them whilst on-shore to screen, debrief and enter observer data into the regional observer database called TUFMAN 2. 2. Building capacity of Tonga's national observers by encouraging and promoting quality observer data as well as creating a performance-based incentive to keep observers on the job. 	
<p><u>Status:</u></p> <p>Regional/National Observer Program (ROP) data is essential in tuna fisheries management and maintaining the data quality and the number of trained observers to do the significant work is critical in fisheries management including the harvest strategy work in WCPFC. In this regard, Tonga recognized the need for continued capacity building and strengthening of Tonga National Observer Program to inform fisheries management.</p> <p>Funds for this project have been transferred in April 2022 and capacity building activities for Tonga's National Observer Program are ongoing.</p>					
E	Tonga	Dr. Tuikolongahau Halafihi <i>CEO for Fisheries</i> Email: supi64t@gmail.com ; thalafihi@tongafish.gov.to , ceo@tongafish.gov.to	Capacity building and strengthening of Tonga's Fisheries Legal Section	This project seeks to strengthen Tonga's Fisheries Legal Section by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the continuation of the employment of the Administrative Assistant, and 2. to continue assisting the Legal Officer in research and administrative matters to help progress the ongoing legislative activities such as inclusion of WCPFC CMMs into the legislative framework. 	5,697.10
<p><u>Status:</u></p> <p>The Administrative Assistant have been providing great assistance to the progressing of the work in the Legal Section both in the main island and in the outer islands. This assistance has greatly contributed to the progressing of various tasks relating to ongoing review of the law and terms and conditions of fishing vessels to ensure that they are in line with WCPFC CMMs including those elements related to the WCPFC harvest strategy framework.</p>					
F	Tuvalu	Mr. Onosai Takataka Tuvalu Fisheries Observer Programme Tuvalu Fisheries Department Ministry of Fisheries and Trade Email: patientmatch@gmail.com	Development of Tuvalu Observer Programme Debriefers to debrief observer data collected electronically	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.To equip the Tuvalu debriefers with the required knowledge and skills needed to conduct e-debriefing effectively and efficiently through an on-the-job training programme 2.To enhance the debriefing capacity of the Tuvalu Observer Programme in meeting the demand required in providing efficient and effective e-debriefing services 	21,062.00
<p><u>Status:</u></p>					

The Tuvalu Observer Programme requested financial support to train Tuvalu Debriefers so that they can be equipped with the required knowledge and skills to conduct electronic debriefing (e-debriefing) for Tuvalu Observer Programme. The planned training is to compliment Tuvalu Observer Programme's initiative to implement 100% observer electronic reporting. Due to the absence of e-debriefing resources in the country, Tuvalu Observer Programme reached out to Papua New Guinea Observer Programme to provide this training because PNG has a very well-established e-debriefing set up within their programme.

The overall intention of the Tuvalu Observer Programme was to send 3 of the Tuvaluan debriefers to Papua New Guinea for training attachment on e-debriefing. However, due to the global pandemic, travel restrictions and border closures prevented the three debriefers from travelling to Papua New Guinea.

In April this year 2022, Tuvalu Observer Programme liaised with the Tuvalu Observer Programme Technical Advisor who is attached to the Tuvalu Observer Programme but was on holidays back in PNG to do an eight-day attachment with PNG Observer Programme to see how best the planned training attachment for the Tuvalu Debriefers can be implemented. This mission was completed in April and a training plan has been developed by the Technical Advisor with focus on the specific key areas that the debriefers should receive training to effectively conduct e-debriefing back in Tuvalu based on his observation back in PNG.

The planned training / attachment is currently on hold due to travel restrictions. Once the restrictions are uplifted, the selected debriefers will travel to PNG to begin their training.

Funds for this project have been transferred in April 2022 and capacity building activities for Tuvalu's National Observer Program (e.g. debriefing) are ongoing.

Annex 2. Carried-over projects from previous years

#	Beneficiary Member(s)	Contacts	Project Title	Purpose/Summary	Budget (USD)
1	Vanuatu	<p>Mr Tony TALEO Deputy Director (Oceanic) Vanuatu Fisheries Department Tel: +678 7748056/ 5463595 E-mail: ttaleo@vanuatu.gov.vu</p> <p>Mr John MAHIT Observer Programme Coordinator Vanuatu Fisheries Department Tel: +678 7101857/ 5967727 E-mail: jomahit@vanuatu.gov.vu</p> <p>Fisheries Department, Private Mail Bag 9045, Port Vila, Vanuatu</p>	Feasibility and Cost-Benefit Assessment of Electronic Monitoring on Vanuatu fishing vessels	The purpose of the present Project is to investigate appropriate logistical arrangements through which hard drives from e-monitoring equipment can be reliably transferred from the vessels concerned to the VFD and analyzed in a timely manner. As part of the Project, an assessment of the costs and benefits of e-monitoring arrangements will be made, and compared to the costs and benefits of the Vanuatu National Observer Programme, which currently employs 56 human observers. The results of the study will guide Vanuatu's policy on e-monitoring implementation going forward.	51,287.32
<p><i>Status:</i></p> <p>Electronic monitoring (EM) is an emerging management tool in tuna fisheries monitoring utilizing new available technologies in gathering data that will help in verification and validation of fisheries' logbook information, leading to enhanced data, which will support improved fisheries management and help verify and monitor implementation of CMMs. In WCPFC, EM data could be a source of independent and impartial data which will supplement the ROP and other data sources, that will eventually support the harvest strategy work that is currently being develop.</p> <p>Vanuatu recognizes that most of its fishing vessels unload their catches in foreign ports which pose a challenge to monitor their fishing activities and operations. Analysis of video recordings from e-monitoring trials has been carried out by national fisheries and observer agencies in countries like Fiji, Samoa, China. However, there have been significant problems regarding lost and misplaced information, long delays in analysis and errors in interpretation. These problems result in increased risks of IUU fishing going undetected by Vanuatu Fisheries Department (VFD), and potential compliance issues for Vanuatu within WCPFC. For e-monitoring to become a reliable part of the VFD's fishery compliance program, analysis of video footage needs to take place in Vanuatu by authorized officers of the Department.</p> <p>The purpose of the present project is to investigate appropriate logistical arrangements through which hard drives from e-monitoring equipment can be reliably transferred from the vessels concerned to the VFD and analysed in a timely manner. As part of the project, an assessment of the costs and benefits of e-monitoring arrangements will be made and compared to the costs and benefits of the Vanuatu National Observer Programme, which currently employs 56 human observers. The results of the study will be essential in guiding Vanuatu's policy on e-monitoring implementation going forward.</p>					

Vanuatu acknowledged that they received the funds on 1st of June 2021. Vanuatu has trained 8 observers for analyzing the EM data and they are currently analyzing 4 new hard drives. Observers completed the analysis for the 1st hard drive and now working on the second. Two more hard drives are waiting to be analyzed. Vanuatu has also managed to expend from the fund for the establishment of a dedicated room within the VFD premises specifically for data analysis. Vanuatu is trying its best effort to finish EM data gathering and analysis for this project within this year (2022) and to provide the final report for this project in Q1 - Q2 of 2023.

2	Kiribati	Kaon Tiamere Principal Fisheries Officer License and Compliance Division Ministry of Fisheries & Marine Resources Development (MFMRD) Email: kaont@mfmrd.gov.ki	Kiribati Capacity Building for Harvest Strategy for 2020	This proposal seeks to build capacity of Kiribati fisheries officers on harvest strategy (HS) work to enable them to fully participate in decision making process for HS as a member of the WCPFC.	54,010.00
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Status:

WCPFC11 agreed to CMM 2014-06 Conservation and Management Measures to develop and implement a harvest strategy approach for key fisheries and stocks in the WCPO. The objective of the CMM 2014-06 is "To agree that the Commission shall develop and implement a harvest strategy approach for each of the key fisheries or stocks under the purview of the Commission according to the process set out in CMM 2014-06." Harvest strategy is a new approach, and it acknowledges that CCMs should have consistent understanding of the harvest strategy approach, in terms of its structure, function and implementation within WCPFC. The Commission further recognizes the special requirements of Developing States Parties for its effective participation in Commission meetings and those of its subsidiary bodies undertaking work on harvest strategies.

This project seeks to continue and build capacity of Kiribati fisheries officers on harvest strategy (HS) work to enable them to fully understand and participate in the discussion of HS as a member of the WCPFC. Kiribati received the funds in March 2020 and sought assistance to SPC however there was no training since the outbreak of COVID-19 and its impact on flight restrictions. Kiribati has requested to carry over the funds in previous year and this is the same for this year based on their preference to have a more productive and interactive workshop if conducted physically. There is a possibility that national borders will be opened completely, and commercial flights resumed starting from this year where MFMRD can start to arrange with SPC for a possible date of training next year (2023).

3	Cook Islands	Mr Andrew Jones Senior Fisheries Officer A.Jones@mmr.gov.ck	Development of National Competent Authority [HACCP strategy] for Cook Islands Offshore Fisheries	This project seeks to support a comprehensive review of Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) Competent Authority programs to ensure that current systems respond to the needs of MMR's fisheries management framework.	74,500.00
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Status:

Cook Islands informed the previous Steering Committee that the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) Bill is undergoing stakeholder consultations which has delayed the development of the HACCP regulations. In 2021, Cook Islands requested to carry over the funds for an additional year and Japan agreed to the request for extension. Some of the project activities were hampered due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic such as international travels required for staff to complete

sanitary inspections training on factory processing vessels. The work of this project is still ongoing, and Cook Islands is requesting to carry over the funds for an additional year. Please refer to the JTF Annual Report 2022 for more details on the project update.					
4	Cook Islands	Ms Pamela Maru Secretary MMR P.Maru@mmr.gov.ck	Improving the participation and engagement in international fisheries forums	The Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) intends to implement a series of training sessions to engage and prepare staff to participate in regional fisheries meetings. This work supports professional development, including working with other Ministries training programs such as diplomatic protocols and negotiations, to ensure staff are adequately trained before they venture into international meetings to represent the Cook Islands.	62,886.10
<u>Status:</u>					
Cook Islands informed the previous Steering Committee that a tender process of exemption from the Government's Tender Committee was requested to facilitate the use of funds for consultancy (above HoM discretionary level). With the assistance from FFA, a consultant from International Environmental Law Project was identified to deliver courses. The planning process on materials and course content is on progress. In 2021, Cook Islands requested to carry over the funds for an additional year and Japan agreed to the request for extension. The work of this project is still ongoing, and Cook Islands is requesting to carry over the funds for an additional year. Please refer to the JTF Annual Report 2022 for more details on the project update.					
5	Tuvalu	Mr. Samasoni Finikaso, Director, Fisheries Department, samfinikaso70@gmail.com Mr Tupulaga Poulasi Principal Fisheries Officer Fisheries Department, tupulagap@tuvalufisheries.tv ; etuati.ptauia@gmail.com	Capacity Building training for Tuvalu Fisheries and Maritime Police officers to conduct High Seas Boarding Inspections (HSBI).	This project seeks enhance the capacity of fisheries and Police Maritime personnel to conduct boarding Inspections in the High Seas in accordance with WCPFC Boarding and Inspection Procedures (CMM 2006-08); by the end of the project the officers will fully understand HSBI procedures and the application of the CMM 2006-08 in the WCPF Convention area	15,000.00
<u>Status:</u>					
The project objectives are i) to enhance the capacity of fisheries and Police Maritime personnel to conduct High Seas Boarding Inspections in the High Seas in accordance with WCPFC Boarding and Inspection Procedures (CMM 2006-08); and ii) to prepare officers to fully understand the HSBI procedures and the application of the CMM 2006-08 in the WCPF Convention area.					

Tuvalu has completed its project, but due to the support from other external funding there was a balance of AUD\$16,668.61. Tuvalu proposed to run similar training/workshop to make use of this funding, and to extend the capacity building activity within the Tuvalu Fisheries Department, Maritime Police officers and other relevant stakeholders on HSBI.

In 2019 the Steering Committee with advice from the JTF Coordinator accepted the Tuvalu's proposal to utilize the remaining funds and Japan also approved the request for extension by conducting a second workshop with the same objectives to the first.

In 2020, COVID-19 has presented numerous logistical challenges to conduct the second training, hence the department has decided for an extension of this project to 2021. New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industry has agreed to deliver this training in-country and due to the practical nature of the training; it will not be ideal to deliver the training on virtual mode. Tuvalu received its new Guardian Class Patrol Boat last year and there has been number of new officers recruited that needs to be trained. As the authorized HSBI vessel, the boarding and inspection evolutions for this training will be the ideal opportunity to test out the patrol boat new operating procedures as well as identifying the gaps and realign with HSBI procedures.

It is envisaged that the second training will also provide a trainer component for staffs from Fisheries and Police Maritime to deliver ongoing & future trainings, and to maintain the level of knowledge and skill to conduct HSBI as per CMM-2006-08. The current balance of the project fund is around AUD\$14,513.81.

Tuvalu Fisheries Department has requested for an extension of this Project in 2021 but due to continuing impact of COVID-19 pandemic where travel restrictions and border closures are in place, the said training was not conducted in 2021. Tuvalu further advised that this training is one of the priorities for 2022 but if things don't improve, it is likely that Tuvalu will be requesting for further extension.

Annex 3. Brief Reports of JTF Projects Completed in 1st Quarter of 2022

3.1. Training and supporting Solomon Islands Electronic Monitoring (EM) Analysts to continue analysing EM records from EM systems installed on Longline fishing vessels

A. Background

Solomon Islands is a Member of the Western and Central Pacific Commission (WCPFC), and through the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, it is the leading member of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) in the implementation of its Longline fishing Vessels Electronic Monitoring (EM) program.

Solomon Islands EM program has been supported by the World Bank through its *Pacific Regional Oceanic Project* (PROP), and this support ended in September 2021.

Monitoring of fishing activities and operations of Longline fishing vessels remains a big challenge to the Ministry, as its environment is not suitable for human observers, and as a WCPFC member, Solomon Islands needs to at least cover 5% of vessels trips with human observers per year, reports from Solomon Islands observer coordinator always shows that we never achieve this 5% requirement.

The Ministry sees that EM is the solution to the challenges of monitoring longline fishing vessels fishing activities and operations. While human observers sometimes sleeps and rest for a while, EM systems cameras never sleeps and records 24/7 port to port. Solomon Islands is leading its PNA members in its EM program with the installations of 8 longline vessels with EM systems in 2017 to 2018, and an additional installation of another 9 systems in 2021, with the aim of having a 100% coverage of EM systems on all Solomon Islands licensed longline fishing vessels by 2023.

The more vessels installed with EM systems, the more data will be recorded, meaning more data to be analysed, and more EM analysts to analyse those data. Solomon Islands only have 3 EM analysts and wanted to increase this to 5, with the support from the World Bank PROP, in year 2021. Solomon Islands biggest need is to sustain these EM Analysts after September 2021 when World Bank PROP project closes.

This project approved for funding under the 2021 JTF was intended to support to Solomon Islands EM analysts to continue analyzing EM records after September 2021, to provide useful data and information to Solomon Islands management for decision making and to other national and regional stakeholders as mandated by Solomon Islands membership agreements and efforts to ensure the sustainability of our tuna resources for our future generations.

B. Project Objectives

1. To provide financial support for our EM Analysts to continue analysing our EM records after September 2021 when World Bank closes its PROP project.
2. To strengthen MCS processes through EM systems on Longline fishing vessels, especially in this time where human observer coverage on fishing vessels is suspended.
3. To analysed and provide EM data to the management and other national and regional stakeholders for decision making.

C. Expected Outcomes

1. EM Analysts should be able to continue analysing EM data after closure of the World Bank PROP project in September 2021.
2. Analysts should be able to provide reliable EM data to management and other stakeholders for decision making.
3. Build technical and analytical capacity for our observers who will be recruited as EM Analysts.
4. Strengthens MCS processes in the Longline Industry through EM systems and data.
5. Strengthens monitoring of Longline fishing vessels especially in this time where human observers monitoring is suspended.

D. Results and Discussions

The project was intended for recruiting, training and supporting five (5) EM Analysts to continue analysing Solomon Islands EM data from EM systems installed on Longline fishing vessels. The project has initially attained its expected outcomes which recruited five EM Analysts, trained them on how to use the EM Data Analysis Software, and they are now analysing our EM data to this date. The pictures below showed the training of EM Data Analysts conducted at the data centre and/or at the vessel.

One of the challenge in the training was the time difference, since that the training was conducted via Zoom, and the trainer conducted the training from Madrid, Spain, the time difference was a challenge, especially to the trainer, because he had to woke up at 1AM Madrid time to conduct the trainings, so we had only 3 to 4 hours for every session, but we manage to complete the training, and the EM Analysts are now analysing our EM data from the vessels installed with EM systems since October 2021 to this date, and will continue to do so with the remaining funds until March 2022.

The summary of EM data analysed by our EM Analysts since October 2021 until March 2022 are shown below.

- A total of 24 Trips conducted with EM Systems on 8 Longline Fishing vessels was analysed.
- From these 24 Trips, a total of 720 sets were recorded, of which a total of 650 of these 495 sets were analysed by our EM Analysts since October 2021 to March 2022.
- Of these 650 sets analysed, on average, a total of 29,250 (45 per set) hooks and a total of 8,000 (15 per set) floats between hooks were declared and recorded as fishing efforts.
- Of the 400 total sets analysed, the total target, by-catches, other species and discards declared are as follows:
 - Albacore
 - Retain Catch (Kg) – On average 30,000 Kg per trip
 - Number of Retain by species – On average 2,200 per trip
 - Bigeye
 - Retain (Kg) – On average 1,900 Kg per trip
 - Number of Retain – On average 101 per trip
 - Yellowfin
 - Retain (Kg) – On average 5,500 Kg per trip
 - Number of Retain Catches – On average 300 catches per trip
 - By-catches (Sharks, Stripped Marlin, Blue Marlin, Black Marlin, Swordfish)
 - On average – Number of Retain catches - 350 per trip
 - Other Species

- On average number of Retain catches - 80 per trip
 - Discards
 - On average number of discards – 85 per trip

E. Budget

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	39,765.75
Funds Utilized	39,765.75
Fund Balance	0
In-Kind Contribution (if any)	None
Other Funding Source/s (if any)	None

F. Fund Balance

The proposal was to support our EM Analysts from October 2021 to March 2022, and as far we have supported our EM Analysts from October 2021 until March 2022, funds for this project was fully utilized as indicated in the balance above.

G. Comments/Conclusions/Feedbacks/Suggestions/Recommendations

If I may on behalf of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, thanked the Japan Trust Fund Board and the Commission for approving our proposal that really supported our EM Analysts since closure of World Bank PROP project in September 2021, and continued to support the analysts until March 2022. The funding support was timely as we all know the negative impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on all government’s economy, including Solomon Islands.



EM Analysts during the Online Zoom training at our data centre and at the vessels

3.2. Training of Solomon Islands Fisheries Observers on the Electronic Reporting Observer e-Obs App to collect data electronically on observer trips to strengthen MCS processes

A. Background

Solomon Islands is a Member of the Western and Central Pacific Commission (WCPFC), and through the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, it is also the leading member of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) in the implementation of; i) Purseine Vessels Electronic Reporting, Longliners Electronic Reporting, Longliners Vessel Day Scheme (VDS), Observers Electronic Reporting (eObs) and Longline Vessels Electronic Monitoring, with these successes, there are challenges that are yet hinders the Ministry to continue fulfilling its roles and responsibilities to its people and the region, the main obvious challenge is funding, especially with the implementation of Observer electronic reporting to further address WCPFC data requirements on Regional Observer Programme (CMM 2018-05, CMM 2017-03 and Agreed Minimum Standards and Guidelines of the Regional Observer Programme).

For monitoring, control, surveillance (MCS) and observer safety purposes, observer data reporting must be secured, consistent and timely. The manual reporting system used by observers in the past is time consuming, risky and inconsistent; observer electronic reporting (eObs), which is the process where observers record and fill data on vessels at sea and send them to the Ministry via a satellite device, makes reporting much easier and consistent. As a priority, entering data on a tablet that is password protected ensure safety to observer data, also, data are send while observers at sea, including GEN3 data, thus provide alerts to compliance officers onshore to prepare and standby before the boat arrives in port for investigation after the removal of the observer on board.

In the final Compliance Monitoring Report (CMR) adopted at WCPFC15, Solomon Islands had requested assistance and additional personnel training. The Ministry currently have 101 active observers, 45 of them already trained on how to use this system to report electronically, they were issued with Tablet devices and Inreach devices that they can use to enter, record and send data while at sea, we still have yet another 56 observers that are yet to be trained on e-reporting. Despite that we have purchased tablet devices under the World Bank project titled “Pacific Regional Oceanic Project (PROP), Solomon Islands”, funding to conduct appropriate trainings for the remaining observers remains a challenge. Receiving funding to train all our remaining observers not only add value to our observers but will also help and equip them to better monitor fishing activities at sea, to provide timely reports and data to the ministry in controlling of our fisheries resources, and help the ministry to provide a stronger surveillance legislations especially on observer safety and reporting.

B. Project Objectives

1. To train our observers on how to use iFIMS electronic reporting system to:
 - Record and enter observer trip data on an android app installed in a tablet
 - Verify and send observer data via satellite device to the ministry’s Fisheries Information Management System (FIMS)
 - Use iFIMS app to:
 - Start new observer trip
 - Fill PS-1 e-form
 - Add Edit Wells in the app

- Fill Daily data forms (PS-4, PS-3 and PS-2 e-forms)
 - Fill other trip eforms (GEN-1, GEN-2, GEN-3, GEN-4, GEN-5 and GEN-6)
 - Fill unloading and Transshipment e-forms
 - Send daily data to Ministry's FIMS
2. To train our observers to use electronic reporting system to enter and send daily trip data to the ministry for monitoring, control and surveillance purposes
 3. To train our remaining observers on e-reporting and trial out the system until such a time where we can go paperless with our observer trip reporting
 4. To train our observers on e-reporting system to provide timely, consistent and accurate data to the ministry as well as other parties and stake holders like WCPFC, FFA, PNA, SPC and other NGOs.

C. Expected Outcomes

1. Trainees should know how to use iFIMS Observer App to fill PS-1, PS-2, PS-3, PS-4 and GEN-1, GEN-2, GEN-3, GEN-4, GEN-5, GEN-6 e-forms.
2. Trainees should be able to Use Tablet and RockStar/Inreach satellite Devices for E-Reporting
3. Trainees should be able to troubleshoot tablet and RockStar devices
4. Trainees should be able to send e-reporting data to FIMS via RockStar
5. Trainees should be able to fill Transshipment and Unloading e-forms
6. Trainees should be able to know when to use SOS
7. Trainees/Observers will be monitored when at sea and when arrive back to port at the end of each trip making sure they use iFIMS Observer App for reporting
8. Trainees will be monitored to make sure they put what they will be trained on into practice
9. MFMR Observer Coordinator and Electronic Reporting Office will make sure that trainees use Tablets and RockStar/Inreach satellite devices for E-Reporting only when on trips by signing the Asset Usage Regulation Agreement.

D. Results and Discussions

The project was intended to train all Solomon Islands active observers to be able to use electronic reporting using the Observer App (eObs App), and initially Solomon Islands trained 48 of the total 89 observers. The remaining 41 observers were trained this year (2022), using the remaining balance as indicated in the budget below. The first training which was participated by 48 observers was successful which follows the PNAO observer electronic reporting model that has 16 modules to complete and covers both theoretical and practical aspects. One of the challenges was to recall the observers back for training as most of the observers were no longer around since the suspension of the observer work in the region. However, some observers were still taking domestic trips, so they were called back for the trainings, and now they are ready to conduct electronic reporting whenever they are deployed on domestic trips.

Another challenge was the rolling out of trainings. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, movements are restricted which also affects PNAO trainers coming to Solomon Islands to conduct trainings. So, we have to conduct the trainings ourselves, it was a challenge but also a learning experience for us, especially to conduct these trainings ourselves, which to me is a

plus for the ministry, because now we won't be depending on PNAO to send their trainers which costs a lot of money for the members, but we can conduct our own trainings. The trainings includes both theoretical and practical aspects.

E. Budget

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	41,291.25
Funds Utilized	41,291.25
Fund Balance	0
In-Kind Contribution (<i>if any</i>)	None
Other Funding Source/s (<i>if any</i>)	None

F. Fund Balance

The project was intended to train all our 89 active Observers in year 2021, and so far 48 observers were trained last year 2021 and another 41 observers were trained before the end of March 2022. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Observer program was suspended, but our observers are still taking domestic trips within Solomon Islands EEZ, and the plan is to train all our observers to conduct electronic reporting for trips on our domestic vessels, as well as on our foreign locally based longline vessels and trips.

G. Comments/Conclusions/Feedbacks/Suggestions/Recommendations

On behalf of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, we wish to thank the Commission and the Japan Trust Fund Board for approving our proposal that supports our observer electronic reporting trainings, the importance of our observer work especially on data collection and being our MCS eyes at sea monitoring and making sure that our laws are followed. We do also know the challenge we are facing when suspending our observer work, and the fact it affects our observer's livelihood especially when they only get paid when they are on trips, so this training opportunity become an avenue where they get daily allowances to support their families in meeting basic needs.

We will continue to support the Commission as its member and ensure that the assistance provided to us through this project meets its intended purpose. We can see from our trainings that the observers are excited to learn a new way of reporting that is much faster, consistent and accurate, and of course more safety for them especially the inclusions of satellite In reach devices that has the SOS capability, where they can press and rescue will be send to them whenever they are faced with near death situations, also using the app makes reporting much easier and faster and near real time.

Despite the many challenges we faced especially with COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns, activities were completed in Quarter 1 of 2022.