



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
EIGHTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**

**ELECTRONIC MEETING
10 – 18 August 2022**

REPORT OF THE JAPAN TRUST FUND STEERING COMMITTEE 2022

**WCPFC-SC18-2022/ RP-JTF-02
5 August 2022**

SECRETARIAT

JAPAN TRUST FUND
2022
REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Steering Committee (SC) meeting of the Japan Trust Fund (JTF) in 2022 was conducted electronically through email correspondence. This was due to the continuing impacts of COVID-19 pandemic that physical face-to-face meeting was not possible.
2. The Steering Committee's roles were i) to review the performance of projects; ii) to resolve any project implementation issues; iii) to share experiences in the implementation of projects; and iv) to learn from those experiences.
3. The 2022 Japan Trust Fund (JTF) Steering Committee meeting process was the same as last year (2021) which were as follows:
 - a) The Secretariat in consultation with JTF recipient countries prepared the 2022 JTF Status Report.
 - b) The 2022 JTF Status report was submitted to Japan for their review, queries and comments that was also posted in the WCPFC-SC18 website (<https://meetings.wcpfc.int/node/16342>).
 - c) The Secretariat in consultation with JTF recipient countries and Japan, prepared the 2022 JTF Steering Committee Report reflecting JTF recipient countries comments and their request for project extension (if any) in 2023, and corresponding responses and approval of Japan.
 - d) The Steering Committee report (SC18-RP-JTF-02) will be posted in the WCPFC-SC18 website.
4. The JTF contact list is in **Attachment A**.

II. REVIEW OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE

5. The Steering Committee received updates on the status of implementation of each of the ongoing projects supported by the JTF (<https://meetings.wcpfc.int/node/16342>). The highlights are described below.

2022 NEWLY APPROVED PROJECTS

A. Solomon Islands Training and supporting of Solomon Islands Electronic Monitoring (EM) Analysts to continue analyzing EM records from EM systems installed in Longline fishing vessels

6. 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 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 is valuable in building its capacity in this new monitoring technologies and evolving fisheries management approach (e.g., harvest strategy).

7. 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.

B. Solomon Islands: Support to Solomon Islands National Electronic Monitoring (EM) Policy Consultations, Drafting and Launching

8. 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 is essential to guide Solomon Islands EM program implementations.

9. 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: 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 (Port Sampling)

10. Noting that fishery-dependent data are integral to sustainable fisheries management including the emerging harvest strategy framework. 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.

11. 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: Capacity building and strengthening of Tonga’s National Observer Program

12. Regional 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.

13. Funds for this project have been transferred in April 2022 and capacity building activities for Tonga’s National Observer Program are ongoing.

E. Tonga: Capacity building and strengthening of Tonga’s Fisheries Legal Section

14. 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.

F. Development of Tuvalu Observer Program Debriefers to debrief observer data collected electronically

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. Currently, the funds are still held in the bank in Tuvalu due to the issue of foreign currency exchange rate. That said, the planned PNG E-debriefing attachment Training has been scheduled for October 2022 with arrangements now taking place.

CARRIED-OVER PROJECTS FROM PREVIOUS YEARS

G. Vanuatu: Feasibility and Cost-Benefit Assessment of Electronic Monitoring on Vanuatu fishing vessels

21. 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.

22. 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.

23. 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 Program, 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.

24. 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 the 1st half of 2023. **Vanuatu is requesting to carry over the funds for 2023 to complete the implementation of its project activities.**

H. Kiribati: Kiribati Capacity Building for Harvest Strategy

25. 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.

26. 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 HS discussions 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).

I. Cook Islands: Development of National Competent Authority [HACCP strategy] for Cook Islands Offshore Fisheries

27. 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.

28. 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. For 2022, the Cook Islands has plan to recommence this work in October with border easements enabling technical experts to travel in-country to continue policy development, including technical support from the Forum Fisheries Agency, that will support the development of regulations. This will include training for staff to undertake relevant competent authority work. The policy development and training elements are expected to be completed by February 2023. The work of this project is still ongoing. **Cook Islands was requesting to carry over the funds for an additional year (2023).**

J. Cook Islands: Improving the participation and engagement in international fisheries forums

29. This project intends to assist the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) 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.

30. Cook Islands project update indicated that activities for this project were ongoing. Although they were facing some challenges that includes Cook Islands Government's plan of action regarding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that caused the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) to re-design the project to

include possibilities for a mixed mode of delivery (i. Content Development and ii. Delivery of Training). As the border restrictions continue to remain in place, splitting the project into two (2) components became the best option for progressing the project. Content development for component one has been completed, with delivery of the training now the focus of the remaining work.

31. 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, 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 course materials have been developed and reviewed by a few people in the region. However, since their development in 2020/21, there is a need to ensure that recent management developments (e.g. examples from WCPFC CMM's) are updated. Arrangements are now in progress for the delivery of the training programme on site in the Cook Islands. The training is now expected to be completed by the end of December 2022 to staff from multiple government agencies with linkages to international fisheries e.g. foreign affairs, maritime transport, environment service. This training timing is based on the availability of the trainer and MMR staff. The report on the project will follow in early 2023. The work of this project is still ongoing. **Cook Islands is requesting to carry over the funds for an additional year (2023).**

K. Tuvalu: Capacity Building training for Tuvalu Fisheries and Maritime Police officers to conduct High Seas Boarding Inspections (HSBI)

32. 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.

33. 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.

34. 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.

35. 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.

36. 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.

37. 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.

38. Tuvalu Fisheries Department has decided to request for an extension of this project in 2023, noting uncertainty in the last few months of 2022.

COMMENTS / RESPONSES / NEXT STEPS

39. Japan raised some concerns on the recurring extensions and sincerely hopes that these projects will make significant progress in the remaining months of 2022 and the 1st half of 2023.

40. Japan requested the Secretariat to advise project managers and contact points to make every effort to complete all activities by the end of this year (2022) or until the 1st half of 2023 at the latest. Japan further advised that though they understand the difficulty related to COVID-19, but there is a possibility that Japan will not be able to approve further extension in the future, for the purpose of accountability to Japanese taxpayers.

41. Japan also explained that in explaining the necessity of the budget for this project, it was explained that harvest strategy is a new emerging management tool for which the recipient CCMs need support. In relation to this, they wish to increase transparency by indicating linkages to harvest strategy wherever relevant and treated in the JTF funded projects.

42. Secretariat advise project managers and contact points to make the best effort to complete all their activities by the end of this year (2022) or until the 1st half of 2023 at the latest as Japan cannot assure approval of further extension of these projects beyond 2023. The JTF status report was revised to add clarity on relevant linkages of the harvest strategy component in all JTF funded projects wherever possible.

43. Japan approved all the requests for project extension of carried-over projects with the understanding that CCMs will make the best effort to complete all activities by the end of this year (2022) until the 1st half of 2023 and provide a final report of their project in the next steering committee meeting (July/August 2023).

III. OTHER ISSUES

44. JTF recipient countries thanked Japan for their understanding, continued support and assistance through the JTF.

45. There were no other issues raised.

IV. CLOSE OF STEERING COMMITTEE

46. The email correspondence for the JTF Steering Committee was closed after all issues have been addressed through email exchanges.

**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
EIGHTEENTH REGULAR SESSION
JAPAN TRUST FUND STEERING COMMITTEE**

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

8 - 28 July 2022

LIST OF JTF CONTACTS

| Country/Agency | Name | Email |
|-----------------|------------------------|--|
| Cook Islands | Pamela Maru | P.Maru@mmr.gov.ck |
| Cook Islands | Andrew Jones | A.Jones@mmr.gov.ck |
| Cook Islands | Kerrie Robertson | K.Robertson@mmr.gov.ck |
| Cook Islands | Alexis Wolfgramm | A.Wolfgramm@mmr.gov.ck |
| Japan | Shinji Hiruma | shinji_hiruma150@maff.go.jp |
| Japan | Aya Matsushima | aya_matsushima190@maff.go.jp |
| Kiribati | Kaon Tiamere | kaont@mfmr.gov.ki |
| Solomon Islands | Derrick Tagosia | DTagosia@fisheries.gov.sb |
| Tonga | Tuikolongahau Halafihi | supi64t@gmail.com |
| Tonga | Poasi Ngaluafe | poasi.ngaluafe@tongafish.gov.to |
| Tonga | Lavinia Vaipuna | lavinia@tongafish.gov.to |
| Tonga | Mele To'a 'Atuekaho | meletoaatuekaho@gmail.com |
| Tonga | Kalolaine Manuopangi | kmanuopangai@gmail.com |
| Tonga | Pelalina Falatau | pelalina.falatau@tongafish.gov.to |
| Tuvalu | Samasoni Finikaso | samfinikaso70@gmail.com |
| Tuvalu | Tupulaga Poulasi | tupulagap@tuvalufisheries.tv |
| Tuvalu | Siouala Malua | sioualam@tuvalufisheries.tv |
| Tuvalu | Onosai Takataka | patientmatch@gmail.com |
| Vanuatu | Tony Taleo | ttaleo@vanuatu.gov.vu |
| Vanuatu | John Mahit | jomahit@vanuatu.gov.vu |
| WCPFC | Feleti Teo | feleti.teo@wcpfc.int |
| WCPFC | SungKwon Soh | sungkwon.soh@wcpfc.int |
| WCPFC | Aaron Nighswander | aaron.nighswander@wcpfc.int |
| WCPFC | Elaine Garvilles | elaine.garvilles@wcpfc.int |