



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
TWENTY-SECOND REGULAR SESSION
11-19 August 2026
Apia, Samoa (Hybrid)**

**UPDATE ON CAPACITY BUILDING AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR
WCPFC HARVEST STRATEGIES**

WCPFC-SC22-2026-MI-IP03

11 July 2026

Submitted by N. Yao¹, I. Lynn¹ and M. Wickens¹

¹ Oceanic Fisheries Programme of the Pacific Community (SPC)

Executive Summary

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) continues to develop and implement harvest strategies for key tuna stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO). With management procedures now adopted for skipjack and South Pacific albacore, the Pacific Community (SPC)'s capacity building has shifted from introductory training towards refresher sessions, targeted technical discussions, and engagement linked to current Commission priorities.

This report summarises SPC-led stakeholder engagement and capacity building activities from June 2025 to June 2026. During this period, SPC delivered four harvest strategies and stock assessment workshops, supported the first Bigeye Tuna Management Workshop, expanded engagement with West Pacific East Asia (WPEA) countries, and continued to develop standardised training materials and videos.

Workshop evaluations and tracer survey results show high participant satisfaction, knowledge gain, and practical application of training, including support for management procedure advice and national harvest strategy discussions. Future work should focus on structured follow-up, refresher training, targeted technical support, and more interactive practical exercises to strengthen long-term capacity and informed participation in WCPFC harvest strategies processes.

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Current Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Building Activities	4
2.1 Workshop Activities.....	4
2.2 Micronesia Stock Assessment and Harvest Strategies Workshop.....	5
2.3 First Bigeye Tuna Management Procedure Workshop (BMW01)	5
2.4 Formalisation of Training Materials	6
2.5 Engagement through the Western Pacific Eastern Asia project	6
2.6 Engagement with University Degree Programmes	6
2.7 Training Videos.....	7
3. Training Outcomes and Evaluation	7
3.1 Participant Survey Results	7
3.2 Tracer Survey Results	9
4. Emerging Themes and Challenges	9
4.1 Integrating Stock Assessment Training and Harvest Strategies Capacity Building	9
4.2 Formalising and Maintaining Training Materials	10
4.3 Strengthening Research Project Pathways	10
5. Improvements and Future Work	10
Acknowledgements	12
Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the SC paper preparation process.....	12
References.....	13

1. Introduction

The WCPO accounts for more than half of the global tuna catch (Hare et al., 2025). Tuna fisheries in this region generate significant economic benefits and are critical to the livelihoods of Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). To support the long-term sustainability of these fisheries, the WCPFC has developed a harvest strategy workplan for skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*), bigeye (*Thunnus obesus*), yellowfin (*Thunnus albacares*), and South Pacific albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) (CMM 2014-06; CMM 2022-03).

The successful implementation of harvest strategies requires strong stakeholder support, engagement, and understanding. Capacity building has therefore been a key focus area for SPC, with activities designed to support members' effective participation in harvest strategies decision-making. Since 2018, SPC has delivered a series of workshops to strengthen members' capacity to engage effectively in the harvest strategies process.

The adoption of the South Pacific albacore management procedure in 2025 (CMM 2025-01) marked another important milestone in the development and implementation of harvest strategies in the WCPO. With harvest strategies now adopted for two of the four key tuna stocks, members have become increasingly familiar with the harvest strategies framework. At the same time, greater engagement from Western Pacific and East Asia (WPEA) participants have highlighted the need to update SPC's capacity building focus and approach to reflect evolving regional priorities and participant needs.

This paper builds on previous capacity building reports (Yao et al., 2025, 2024; Scott et al., 2023, 2022, 2021). It summarises SPC-led capacity building and stakeholder engagement activities delivered from June 2025 to June 2026, outlines key challenges and lessons learned, and proposes priorities for future activities.

2. Current Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Building Activities

2.1 Workshop Activities

Since June 2025, the Sustainable Pacific Fisheries project (SPF) has delivered four harvest strategies workshops. This year, all workshops were co-delivered with SPC-Oceanic Fisheries Program National Science team and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), reflecting the continued development of harvest strategies in the region and members' increasing familiarity with the process. As most members have now received at least some harvest strategies training, the current approach has shifted toward refresher training and more targeted discussions linked to Commission priorities, rather than introductory workshops.

In total, 69 participants have attended harvest strategies workshops, representing PICTs as well as distant water fishing nations, including Indonesia and Vietnam. Of these participants, 58% were male and 42% were female (Table 1).

Table 1. List of workshops and consultation events provided by SPC from June 2025 to June.

Date	Workshop Type	Benefit Country	Male	Female	Total
September 2025	In person full-length	Vanuatu	10	7	17
March 2026	In person full-length	Micronesia SAW	9	6	15
April 2026	In person full-length	Kiribati	5	4	9
June 2026	In person full-length	Regional SAW	16	12	28
Total			58%	42%	69

2.2 Micronesia Stock Assessment and Harvest Strategies Workshop

The Micronesia Stock Assessment and Harvest Strategies Workshop was delivered in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), from 2–6 March 2026, with 15 participants from RMI, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru and Kiribati. This was the first time that a subregional Stock Assessment and Harvest Strategies Workshop had been delivered in Micronesia. The workshop covered both stock assessment and harvest strategies materials, with an emphasis on Commission priorities. Given the geographic location of Micronesian countries, attending regional stock assessment workshops (usually hosted in Noumea, New Caledonia) and other training events can be logistically challenging, often limiting participation to one or two representatives from each country.

Delivering the workshop in Micronesia also helped address a key barrier for Micronesian members, as very limited flight connectivity to workshops held further south can add up to four additional transit days and make it difficult for new staff to upskill while away from the office, particularly given domestic workloads. Consequently, some of these countries have failed to send participants to harvest strategies workshops held in previous years. The Micronesia Stock Assessment and Harvest Strategies workshop was well received by participants, as reflected in the post-training survey results.

2.3 First Bigeye Tuna Management Procedure Workshop (BMW01)

The First Bigeye Tuna Management Workshop (BMW01) was held virtually from 20–21 May 2026 and provided an important opportunity for WCPFC members, observers, and SPC to discuss the next steps in developing a harvest strategy for bigeye tuna. The workshop helped members develop a shared understanding of the process, timeline, and key decisions needed before the possible adoption of a bigeye tuna management procedure in 2026. Discussions focused not only on technical aspects, but also on how

future management arrangements may affect different fisheries, regions, and members (WCPFC, 2026).

The workshop highlighted the importance of providing clear and timely guidance to SPC, so future analyses can better address member's needs. Overall, BMW01 supported ongoing dialogue among members and contributed to a more inclusive, transparent process for developing bigeye tuna harvest strategy.

2.4 Formalisation of Training Materials

In 2025, the MSE team consolidated and reorganised its training materials after recognising that existing content was not standardised. In 2026, the team developed a standardised set of training materials that was used across workshops, with adjustments made to reflect country-specific contexts. In designing these materials, accessibility was prioritised, and the materials are publicly available for download from the [SPC website](#).

2.5 Engagement through the Western Pacific Eastern Asia project

This year, SPC expanded its engagement with WPEA countries, including Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, through the WPEA programme. In February, the MSE team participated in a workshop with Indonesian participants, which focused on data and fisheries management issues, where harvest strategy topics matters were also discussed, including implications to overlapping harvest strategy arrangements in Indonesia.

Engagement continued at the Stock Assessment Workshop in May, where three participants from WPEA countries attending the workshop in Noumea. In addition, the MSE team is currently participating in the WPEA mentorship programme, providing ongoing mentoring to scientists from WPEA countries.

These ongoing efforts have strengthened collaboration, improved communication, and supported more timely information sharing between SPC and its WPEA partners, helping build capacity and foster regional engagement in harvest strategy development

2.6 Engagement with University Degree Programmes

In April 2026, the MSE team presented an introduction to harvest strategies to students in the ANCORS Graduate Certificate in Fisheries Management and Development workshop at the University of Wollongong. This graduate certificate is designed for professionals currently working as fisheries policy officers, mid-level managers and enforcement officers in the governments of Pacific Island members of the FFA. The program has run every year since 2024. Approximately half of the participants were from the Solomon Islands, while the remainder were from Vanuatu, Kiribati, and the Cook Islands. The presentation focused on where harvest strategies fit within the broader picture of fisheries management and the role of governments and their staff in providing feedback and direction for tuna harvest strategies.

2.7 Training Videos

A new harvest strategies video on [performance indicators](#) was released in February 2026. The video is one of six episodes in the harvest strategies video series and has since been used during several capacity building workshops, where it has received highly positive feedback from participants. Using a light-hearted and engaging tone, the video explains technical concepts and terminology that can otherwise be difficult to understand. By presenting performance indicators in a more accessible and relatable way, it has helped support discussions with participants and served as a useful tool for introducing key harvest strategy concepts in workshop settings. The video is freely available on the SPC YouTube channel ([harvest strategies playlist](#)), providing an accessible resource for continued learning beyond the workshops (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Participants from Vanuatu harvest strategies workshop watching harvest strategies videos.

3. Training Outcomes and Evaluation

3.1 Participant Survey Results

Post-training surveys were conducted for four workshops across Micronesia, Vanuatu, Kiribati and New Caledonia between July 2025 and July 2026. A total of 51 participants responded to the surveys, of whom most, 55% whom were female.

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with different elements of the workshop on a five-point scale (with 1 indicating very low satisfaction and 5 indicating very high satisfaction). Data from the surveys consistently demonstrate high levels of satisfaction with the training content, organisation, delivery and engagement. Similarly, respondents reported high levels of knowledge gain and perceived relevance to their work (see Table 2 below).

Table 2. Workshop ratings July 2025 – July 2026.

	SAW New Caledonia May 2026	MSE Kiribati April 2026	MSE/SAW Vanuatu September 2025	SAW Micronesia March 2026	Average
Training content	4.78	5.00	4.56	4.78	4.78
Opportunity for feedback	4.78	5.00	4.44	4.89	4.78
Participant engagement	4.67	4.83	4.00	4.67	4.54
Time allocated	4.67	4.33	4.22	4.44	4.42
Training organisation	4.89	4.67	4.44	4.78	4.70
Knowledge gain	4.67	5.00	4.56	4.89	4.79
Application to work	4.81	4.50	4.11	4.44	4.47
Recommend to others	4.85	4.83	4.44	4.89	4.75

Qualitative and quantitative data show that workshop participants believe they are gaining knowledge by attending MSE and SAW workshops. However, participants also noted that the knowledge gained is not always directly applicable to their current role.

The purpose of MSE and SAW workshops is not to teach participants how to develop a harvest strategy or conduct a stock assessment, but rather to help them understand these processes. The goal is for participants to develop an adequate understanding of these processes so that they can analyse, interpret and use the information to inform fisheries management decisions at the national level and advocate at the regional level. For example:

I will be able to apply knowledge on stock assessment, tuna biology, data analysis, reference points (MSY, TRP, LRP) and fisheries management concepts. These will help me in fisheries licensing decisions, oceanic fisheries management such as Reviewing our Access Agreement and understanding stock status reports for tuna resources. (Female respondent, SAW, New Caledonia 2026)

This goal is progressing well – with participants reporting an intention to use knowledge gained and evidence of real-life application (see Section 3.2 below). However, there is still room for improvement. Participant feedback consistently asks for more and longer trainings, as well as the opportunity to test their skills/learnings through practical exercises and interactive sessions. For example:

For future sessions, there could be more interactive sessions. The information is quite technical in some places, so I think having some interactive sessions could help with information retention. (Female respondent, MSE/SAW, Vanuatu 2025)

While all training subjects are considered useful, some are more complex than others – like stock assessment modelling – and require ongoing refresher training.

3.2 Tracer Survey Results

In May 2026, the tracer survey was distributed to participants who had completed SPF-funded training, including training on harvest strategies, more than 12 months earlier. It assessed whether participants had gained and applied new knowledge and skills, and whether the training had influenced their confidence, attitudes or career aspirations. In total, 48 participants were invited and 23 responded, giving a 48% response rate. Respondents included participants from Stock Assessment, Harvest Strategies and e-Reporting training delivered in 2025, with 22% of respondents reporting having previously attended Harvest Strategies training.

The results indicate that harvest strategies training improved participants' understanding of management procedures and their role in fisheries management. Participants reported applying this knowledge directly in their work, including providing advice on the South Pacific albacore management procedure. As one respondent noted, the training helped them provide advice on *“the best options for us in terms of the MP and Harvest strategies of the Albacore species”*. Another respondent noted that the workshop *“helped me explain complex concepts to the team in simple terms”*. The training also supported broader application, with one participant stating that what they learned was *“very useful”* for their country's work to develop harvest strategies for pelagic and demersal species. Overall, the survey suggests that harvest strategies training is strengthening both technical understanding and participants' confidence to engage in national and regional fisheries management processes.

4. Emerging Themes and Challenges

4.1 Integrating Stock Assessment Training and Harvest Strategies Capacity Building

During this cycle, harvest strategies training has increasingly been co-delivered with stock assessment content. This reflects an emerging shift in capacity-building work, as most members have now received at least one national training workshop on harvest strategies. At this stage, the focus is less on introducing harvest strategies concepts for the first time and more on refreshing existing knowledge, strengthening understanding of key technical concepts, and linking the training more directly to current Commission priorities.

Co-delivering harvest strategies and stock assessment materials provides an opportunity to build on participants' existing knowledge and to better connect the technical foundations of stock assessment with harvest strategies concepts. It also

allows more time for discussion and practical engagement. In addition, co-delivery with national science teams and FFA has helped make the training more relevant to regional and Commission priorities. This format has been well received and has become increasingly popular during this cycle.

4.2 Formalising and Maintaining Training Materials

The standardised training materials on the SPC website to introduce harvest strategies and stock assessment concepts, but they lack information on current and upcoming priorities. Since harvest strategies training is shifting away from introductory content, these resources may be less likely to be used during future workshops but remain a valuable resource for participants to review before or after a workshop. The resources will also be reviewed and evaluated by researchers from the “Capacity Building and Behaviour Change in Pacific Fisheries” research assignment, which is described in section 4.3.

4.3 Strengthening Research Project Pathways

In 2025, SPC designed and advertised a “Capacity Building and Behaviour Change in Pacific Fisheries” research proposal to investigate and recommend capacity building approaches for SPF-funded projects. As mentioned above, past evaluations, survey data, feedback from project managers, and Heads of Fisheries have suggested that current capacity building approaches are not always translating into the desired behaviour changes on the ground. Partners from FFA, MFAT², WPEA and MPI³ were invited to review and provide feedback to the Research Proposal. Representatives from each partner will sit on the Research Committee and play an active role in the review and approval of the Research Plan and Research Report.

5. Improvements and Future Work

Future capacity-building work should focus on formalised follow-up activities and refresher training. As many members have now received initial training on harvest strategies and stock assessment, the priority is increasingly to reinforce existing knowledge, provide updates on Commission priorities, and support participants in applying these concepts in national and regional processes. Targeted refresher sessions, technical clinics, and continued post-workshop engagement would help maintain momentum and strengthen the long-term impact of training.

Closer collaboration with WPEA project could also help align harvest strategies and stock assessment training with broader regional capacity-building efforts, while providing a useful pathway for follow-up engagement with participants between workshops.

² New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

³ Ministry for Primary Industries

Future work should also build on the outcomes of the research project pathway. These projects provide a practical mechanism for participants to apply what they have learned in workshops to national or regional questions, while also helping to identify areas where further technical support is needed. The outcomes can be used to refine training materials, tailor future workshops to member priorities, and strengthen ongoing engagement among participants, member national science teams, FFA, and SPC.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge funding for this work from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) funded project “Sustainable Pacific Fisheries”. We also acknowledge Marino-O-Te-Au Wichman for carefully reviewing this manuscript.

Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the SC paper preparation process

No AI technologies were used in the preparation of this paper.

References

CMM2014-06 (2014). Conservation and management measures to develop and implement a harvest strategy approach for key fisheries and stocks in the WCPO. Technical report, Manila, Philippines.

CMM2022-03 (2022). Conservation and management measure on establishing a harvest strategy for key fisheries and stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. Technical report, Da Nang, Vietnam.

CMM2025-01 (2025). Conservation and management measure on a management procedure for South Pacific albacore. Technical report, Manila, Philippines.

Hare, S. R., Vidal, T., Castillo Jordàn, C., Day, J., Hamer, P. A., Hill, N., Machful, P., Magnusson, A., Nicol, S., Odongo, V., Panizza, A., Peatman, T., Scott, R. D., Senina, I., Sloyan, B., Teeares, T., and Pilling, G. M. (2025). The Western and Central Pacific tuna fishery: 2024 overview and status of stocks. *Tuna Fisheries Assessment Report* No. 25. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community. 75 p.
<https://www.spc.int/digitallibrary/get/e3vwh>

Scott, F., Scott, R., Yao, N., Pilling, G. M., Hamer, P., and Hampton, J. (2021). Capacity building and stakeholder engagement activities for WCPFC harvest strategies. Technical Report WCPFC-SC17-2021/MI-IP-02, Online, August 2021.

Scott, F., Scott, R., Yao, N., Pilling, G. M., and Hamer, P. (2022). Update on capacity building and stakeholder engagement activities for WCPFC harvest strategies. Technical Report WCPFC-SC18-2022/MI-IP-10, Online, August 2022.

Scott, F., Scott, R., Yao, N., and Natadra, R. (2023). Update on capacity building and stakeholder engagement activities for WCPFC harvest strategies. Technical Report WCPFC-SC19-2023/MI-IP-05, Koror, Palau, August 2023.

WCPFC (2026). *First Bigeye Tuna Management Workshop (BMW01): Chair's Summary Report, Rev.01*. Electronic Meeting, 20–21 May 2026. WCPFC document BMW01-2026-00.

Yao, N., Manrique, L., Scott, R., Scott, F., Hamer, P., and Pilling, G. (2024). Update on capacity building and stakeholder engagement activities for WCPFC harvest strategies. Technical Report WCPFC-SC20-2024/MI-IP-04, Manila, Philippines, 14–21 August 2024.

Yao, N., Lynn, I., Scott, R., Scott, F., Wickens, M., and Pilling, G. (2025). Update on capacity building and stakeholder engagement activities for WCPFC harvest strategies. WCPFC Scientific Committee Twenty-First Regular Session, Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 13–21 August 2025. WCPFC-SC21-2025/MI-IP-01.