



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
TENTH REGULAR SESSION**
Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands
6-14 August 2014

INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

WCPFC-SC10-2014/GN-WP-04

Secretariat

I. Summary Report of the Ninth Regular Session of the Scientific Committee

1. The Secretariat posted on the SC9 website an adopted version of the Summary Report of the Ninth Regular Session of the Scientific Committee on 23 August 2013, and a professionally edited version on 24 November 2013.

II. Science Services from the SPC-OFP

2. The Commission signed an MOU with the Commission's scientific services provider (SPC-OFP) to provide science and data management services in 2006 and has been updating Annex I of the MOU each year to accommodate the changing services as requested by the Commission for each calendar year. In 2009, the Commission and the SPC agreed to revise the MOU to provide for a three-year arrangement as directed by the Commission. The three-year MOU applied through 2012 was terminated and a revised three-year MOU was signed in March 2013, which included implementation of the Shark Research Plan adopted by the Commission. The components for 2014 services in Annex I include:

- Data management, statistical analyses and related services
 - Data management
 - Compilation of catch and effort estimates
 - Data dissemination
 - Technical / policy advice
 - Support of other data-related projects of the Commission
- Stock assessment and related analytical services
 - Target species stock assessments and auxiliary analyses
 - Implementation of the Shark Research Plan
 - Model development and refinement
- Management analyses and CMM performance monitoring
 - Conservation and management measure performance monitoring
 - Analyses to support development of conservation and management measures
- Other advisory and technical services

3. The SPC-OFP produced 37 papers and reports for SC10 and provided *ad hoc* advice and support throughout the year. In addition, SPC-OFP assisted the following activities:
- Participated in TCC9, MOW2 and WCPFC10, producing several key papers and presentations for each meeting;
 - Participated in the review workshops on port sampling and annual tuna catch estimation workshops in the WPEA Project participating countries (Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam); and
 - Conducted the Pacific Tuna Tagging Program (PTTP) and coordinated PTTP Steering Committee Meeting.

III. Progress of SC Work Programme Activities

4. SC work programmes conducted in 2013-2014 include:
- *(Project 15) West Pacific East Asia Project*
While the Secretariat is preparing another WPEA Project, core WPEA activities such as data collection from port sampling and convening annual tuna catch estimates workshops continued. A new GEF Project called “Sustainable Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the West Pacific and East Asian Seas” will commence later this year and an Inception Workshop is scheduled on 4-5 November 2014.
 - *(Project 35) Refinement of bigeye parameters Pacific-wide (A comprehensive review and study of bigeye tuna reproductive biology)*
WCPFC had a three-year contract with SPC-OFP on this project (Jan 2013-Dec 2014), subject to decisions of the WCPFC10 and 11. Allocated budgets for the three years are \$70K, \$75K and \$75K, respectively. SPC-OFP will present a progress report on the Pacific-wide sampling and preliminary analysis.
 - *(Project 42) Pacific-wide tagging project*
A PTTP Steering Committee meeting will be convened during SC9 and SPC-OFP will present a progress report on 2012 tagging activities and the status of tag recovery. The Commission supports \$10K to assist operations and activities related with the PTTP including tag recovery.
 - *(Project 57) Limit Reference Points*
SPC-OFP will present an analysis on the appropriate period for estimating the average recruitment for each species in the LRP $20\%SB_{recent, F=0}$, and the appropriate values of X for each species in the LRP $F_{x\%SPRo}$.
 - *(Project 60) Purse Seine Species Composition*
SPC-OFP submitted a proposal for funding support from 2013 unobligated budget of \$39,985 for the extension of purse seine species composition research. The government of Papua New Guinea funded \$10,000 to this project. SPC-OFP will provide the outputs of the extended project activity.
 - *(Project 69) Improvement of MultiFan Catch at Length (in line with recommendations from the report of the Peer Review for the 2011 Bigeye Tuna Stock Assessment)*
This is the second year of the 2-year project and SPC will provide a final report to SC10.
 - *(Project 70) Improvement of stock assessments in line with recommendations from the report of the Peer Review for the 2011 Bigeye Tuna Stock Assessment*

This project is funded \$160,000 per year for three years for SPC to hire an additional staff member to focus on this work. This is the second year and a progress report will be presented at SC10.

- *(Project 71) South Pacific Swordfish Biology*
Along with the SC9 recommendation for additional work to be undertaken on age, growth and age validation of SP swordfish, the Secretariat is arranging a contract with the CSIRO to partly support their project (Determination of Swordfish growth and maturity relevant to the southwest Pacific stock), which includes the requests from SC9. The CSIRO's project proposal will be presented at SC10 for CCM's comments/suggestions to refine the requests from SC9.
- *(Project 72) Development of Limit Reference Points for Elasmobranchs*
Identifying LRPs for key shark species has been the Commission's high priority and the Secretariat funded a research from 2013 unobligated budget to propose the most appropriate limit reference points for elasmobranchs in the WCPO. A project report will be presented at SC10.
- *(Project 73) Development of a best practice approach to standardise CPUE indices for use in stock assessments*
This research was selected as a high priority project to be funded by 2013 unobligated project and the outcome will be presented at SC10.

IV. Cooperation with other organizations

5. The Secretariat was represented at the following science-related meetings during the last 12 months:

- SPC pre-stock assessment workshop, 8-12 April; and Tuna Data Workshop, 14-18 April 2014, Noumea, New Caledonia.
- The 14th ISC and its Working Group meetings, 10-21 July 2014, Taipei, Taiwan.
- WPEA Project related workshops and meetings in Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam

V. Research Projects

Western Pacific East Asia Project

6. In late 2007, GEF endorsed a Secretariat's proposal to support a 3-year WPEA project, as an expansion of the Indonesia and Philippines Data Collection Project, also including Vietnam. GEF, after securing significant co-financing from several countries, approved in March 2009 funding of USD 950,000. The project started in January 2010 and was completed in March 2013. Whilst implementing the project, the UNDP, collaborating with the Secretariat, prepared a Program Framework Document, covering Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem Project, WPEA, and PEMSEA's Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia project, which was endorsed by the GEF Secretariat in mid-2012. Following this endorsement, a Project Implementation Form was prepared and accepted by the GEF in mid-2013, and a Project Document was developed by Drs Tony Lewis and Anna Tengberg, which was in turn endorsed by the GEF Secretariat on 12 May 2014. At the Project Appraisal Committee meeting, held in Manila, 28 May 2014, the three project partner countries agreed that WCPFC

should be the Project Implementing Partner. An inception workshop for the new project is scheduled to be held in Da Nang, Vietnam, 4-5 November 2014.

7. Since the completion of the first WPEA project in March 2013, the Secretariat continued to support and manage core activities, including:

- data collection from port sampling in the three countries;
- data review and annual catch estimation workshops in the three countries;
- logbook awareness workshops in Indonesia to improve logbook data collection;
- research on municipal tuna fisheries to improve the accuracy of catch data and species composition in Philippines;
- expansion of port sampling and data collection from three to nine provinces in Vietnam; etc.

Through the WPEA project, the participating partner’s capacity to comply with WCPFC requirements have been significantly improved, and in 2014, for the first time Vietnam’s tuna catch was incorporated into WCPO tuna stock assessments.

8. GEF’s funding support to the new project is USD 2,233,578 over the coming three years. However, significant amount of co-financing is necessary to successfully implementing the new project. The following matrix shows a synopsis of the new project: *Sustainable Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the West Pacific and East Asian Seas*.

<i>Components</i>	<i>Expected Outcomes</i>
1: Regional governance for building adaptive capacity in the management of HMS	1.1 Improved regional mechanisms for monitoring and assessment of MHS and IUU fishing in the POWP LME and the EAS LMEs
	1.2 Enhanced capacity of technical staff, policy and decision makers to integrate climate change impacts on HMS into management regimes
	1.3 Climate change concerns mainstreamed into national fishery sector policy
2: Implementation of policy, institutional and fishery management reform	2.1 Enhanced compliance of existing legal instruments at national, regional and international levels
	2.2 Adoption of market-based approaches to sustainable harvest of tunas
	2.3 Reduced uncertainty in stock assessment of POWP LME and EAS LMEs HMS, and improved understanding of associated ecosystems and their biodiversity
	2.4 EAFM guiding sustainable harvest of the oceanic tuna stock and reduced by-catch of sea turtles, sharks and seabirds
3: Knowledge sharing	3.1 Regional knowledge sharing established on POWP LME and EAS LMEs shared tuna stocks and associated ecosystems

9. Taking this opportunity, the Secretariat appreciates FFA and ACIAR for their in-kind contribution and agencies in the matrix below for providing their cash grants during 2009 – 2012. Without the input of the SPC-OFP’s expertise, the first WPEA project could not be as successful as written in the Final Independent Evaluation Report.

<i>Name of co-financier (source)</i>	<i>Actual Amount (\$)</i>
AusAID	300,000
ISSF	10,000
Japan Trust Fund	159,130
Korea (Yeosu project)	220,000

Netherlands	25,964
NOAA/NMFS	70,000
WCPFC	225,000
WWF/NOAA	5,000
<i>Total co-financed amount</i>	<i>1,015,094</i>

Japanese Trust Fund Project

10. This is the third year of the second 5 year phase of the Japan Trust Fund, with JTF support amounting to USD 354,195 in 2014. Thirteen projects were supported.

11. An SPC project ‘Observer Tuna Database Workshop’ was carried over from the previous year due to key staff changes. The workshop has now been successfully completed (3-7 March 2014).

12. Exceptionally the JTF allowed a substantial underspend of \$25,464.08 on the 2013 JTF supported Stock Assessment Workshop to be carried over in support of the SPC’s 2014 Stock Assessment Workshop.

13. The thirteen new projects approved for funding support in 2014 were for FFA, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, five SPC projects in support of developing states, two Tongan projects, Tuvalu and Vietnam.