



**Consultation Meeting on Development of the New Strategic and Corporate Plans for
the Commission**

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia
19-20 September 2016

Briefing on the WCPFC Strategic Planning Process

**WCPFC-STP-2016-02
13 September, 2016**

WCPFC Strategic Planning Process

Assessment Findings & Strategic Issue Framing

September 7, 2016

Overview

To inform the Western and Central Pacific Fishery Commission's strategic planning process, the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) interviewed and received survey responses from 30 key informants, including representatives of member states and participating territories, cooperating non-members, inter-governmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations representing both environmental conservation and fishing industry interests.

Interviews and the survey, conducted confidentially, focused on the following lines of inquiry:

- *What is currently working well in terms of what the Commission does and the value it provides to stakeholders?*
- *Which core services and areas of focus may need improvement, and why?*
- *What does the future hold, and how can the Commission adapt to strengthen its relevance?*

Interview participants provided a diversity of views that provides a foundation to initiate a strategic planning process as well as ideas for strengthening organizational operations, processes, and culture. Participants spoke to the importance of the Commission's mission, the challenge of linking data and measures, the need to be nimble given fisheries trends, and expressed high hopes for the strategic planning process to shape a ten-year vision for the Commission.

Please note that this document does not attempt to identify what is "correct" or "accurate" with regards to the Commission, the fisheries, or the current state of fisheries management. Rather, CBI's process seeks to elicit a broad range of perspectives (which this document attempts to summarize) and then help Commission members refine options and priorities from those perspectives in service of working towards a desired future state.

The strategic planning proposed below departs from approach taken for the Commission's previous strategic planning process that resulted in a proposed plan being tabled at WCPFC10 and WCPFC11. The process proposed here is grounded in the perspectives of a broad cross-section of members and participating territories and other key stakeholders. Additionally, this strategic planning process attempts to analyze key trends shaping the fisheries and fishing industry in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean to provide a pathway forward for the Commission over the next ten years.

A high-level synthesis of salient stakeholder input is provided immediately below, followed by CBI's recommended focus for the Commission's strategic planning process.

Topline Insights from Stakeholder Input

Commission Value and Strengths

Many informants **spoke to the importance of the Commission's mission** of ensuring the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks in the western and central Pacific Ocean. According to these stakeholders, the Commission provides the only available forum and framework for members and participating territories to participate in sustainable management of the fisheries on the high seas.

Critically, by providing greater **transparency in management and decision-making** around fisheries management, the Commission also provides important **opportunities for non-member stakeholders to participate** in the management of the fisheries through information-sharing and highlighting areas of concern.

Stakeholders identified a **variety of strengths and accomplishments** of the Commission's work, including specific management measures and elements of the compliance program, the world-class quality of the science program, the leadership role played by Pacific Island states, and the professionalism and competence of the Secretariat.

A number of **structural and contextual dynamics make the Commission's work exceedingly challenging**. These include the inherent difficulty of managing highly migratory fish stocks on the high seas because they are a shared, wide-ranging resource; a tension facing almost all stakeholders between short-term economic and development interests and longer-term stewardship and sustainability interests; and the diverging incentive structures between Pacific Island nations and distant water fishing nations that impede taking effective management actions on issues of shared concern.

Areas to Strengthen

Informants identified the following key areas where the Commission can strengthen its work:

- **Identify priority areas and an overall strategy** for the Commission's work to provide greater clarity and focus efforts to make progress on crucial areas of shared concern.
- **Increase trust and confidence** in the Commission's processes and prospects for continued progress towards the mission among members and other stakeholders.
- **Close the gap between scientists' assessments and advice concerning various fish stocks and the management measures** adopted by the Commission, particularly for bigeye tuna, Pacific bluefin tuna, and yellowfin tuna.
- **Enhance the comprehensiveness and quality of data collection** in key areas to strengthen both the Commission's scientific and management efforts.
- **Enhance the decision-making process** to allow for greater creativity in discussions and negotiations, streamline the adoption of management measures, and make sure that enacted measures are written so as to allow for assessment of compliance.
- Enhance the effectiveness of the Commission's **compliance measures**.
- Develop effective responses to **issues of emergent and evolving concern**, including reflagging and chartering of vessels, ecosystem-based management, social and labor concerns, and climate change.

Important Trends

Stakeholders identified the following trends shaping the fisheries, fishing industry, and fisheries management in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean:

Evolving economics and technology

- **Increasing pressure on WCPO fisheries** due to expanding fleets from various nations and territories, a shift of fleets into the region from other oceans, and improving technology and its wider deployment leading to enhanced yields and increased bycatch, particularly in the purse seine fisheries.
- Wider deployment of enhanced technology in the purse seine fisheries leading to **enhanced yields and profitability of certain fisheries**. Conversely, enhanced yields are also **threatening the ecological and/or economic sustainability of certain fisheries**, both purse seine and longline, due to decreasing stocks and/or declining market prices.
- **Consolidation** of some less competitive fleets due to increased competition.
- **Increasingly complex business relationships** between vessels, vessel associations, processors, chartering states, Pacific Island states, distant water states, sub-regional groups or arrangements, etc.
- Improving and more accessible **technologies for electronic monitoring and reporting**.

Role of the Pacific Island states

- **Significant influence and control over the purse seine fisheries by Pacific Island states** due to long-standing cooperation, joint negotiation, and use of the vessel day scheme.
- **Pacific Island states capturing a greater share of value** from the fisheries through greater deployment of their own fleets, reflagged / chartered vessels, development of shore based facilities, and use of the vessel day scheme.
- **Increasing Pacific Island-domestication of the fishing industry** through reflagging / chartering of vessels, expansion of Pacific Island fleets, and incentivizing on-shore development measures.

Management and contextual trends

- Expanding incorporation of **harvest strategies, ecosystem-based approaches, and social and labor issues into fishery management** in WCPFC's sister regional fishery management organizations.
- **Growing public awareness and interest** in the Commission's work and effectiveness by civil society, consumers, and the market, particularly around sustainable, fair, and equitable fisheries.
- **Climate change** is causing growing concern and decreasing predictability around fisheries. This unpredictability, in turn, significantly impacts Pacific Island nations' food security and economic stability.

Aspirations for Strategic Planning

Stakeholders articulated the following high-level aspirations and goals for the Commission's strategic planning process:

- **Align stakeholders around a longer-term (e.g., 10 year) vision** for the Commission that will help set direction for the Commission's future work and will provide greater clarity to stakeholders about the Commission's intended direction.
- Articulate **sustainable management of all fisheries** as a clear goal of the Commission and **identify a roadmap and clear milestones** to achieve this goal.
- Identify clear priorities for the Commission's work to **streamline the Commission's efforts around key strategic priorities**. This would enhance the Commission's effectiveness in achieving these priorities while reducing the time and costs needed for the Commission's work.
- Bring the work of the Commission's subcommittees and intersessional working groups into **greater alignment with the Commission's core mandate** of sustainable management of fish stocks.
- Clearly articulate and **differentiate between the respective roles and responsibilities of the Commission, as a whole, and the Secretariat**.
- **Enhance the level of trust and confidence** in the Commission's process and prospects for continued progress towards the mission among members and other stakeholders.

Strategic Issues Framing the 2016 Strategic Planning Process

Given CBI's independent assessment findings, the Commission is arguably at a key decision point with a number of strategic choices to make in its near future. To help the Commission make these decisions, CBI proposes orienting the strategic planning process around three overarching frames:

1. **Clarifying where we currently are (i.e., What do the stakeholder data say?)** – A wealth of information collected through CBI's interviews and online surveys with members and participating territories, cooperating non-members, inter-governmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations provide a rich trove of information for the participants in the September 19-20 consultation meeting to ground themselves in. CBI will present the assessment findings summarized in this report to help meeting participants discuss and familiarize themselves with the diversity of perspectives received about the Commission's future. This level-setting effort is intended to spark further definition of key issues and options for moving forward quickly.
2. **Naming where we want to be in ten years (i.e., What are our 10-year strategic priorities?)** – Given both the importance of managing the health of the tuna species under its purview and the diverse trends shaping WCPO fisheries, CBI recommends that the Commission discuss and decide on a set of strategic priorities to pursue over the next ten years. These strategic priorities will help set direction for the Commission's future work and will clarify areas of focus for the Commission's diverse constituents and stakeholders. Based on its analysis of the Commission's current context and future trends, CBI recommends that Commission stakeholders consider the following *draft* ten-year priorities for adoption:

- a. *Implement harvest strategies to manage the stocks under the Commission’s purview.*
 - b. *Improve processes for collection and analysis of quality and timely data.*
 - c. *Develop a strategy to address the issue of allocation in coordination with harvest strategies.*
 - d. *Implement a strategy to enhance compliance with management measures.*
 - e. *Operationalize the Convention’s principles regarding compatibility of management measures among national zones and between national zones and the high seas.*
 - f. *Develop a strategy to implement ecosystem-based management.*
 - g. *Develop and implement a climate adaptation strategy for WCPO fisheries.*
3. ***Working towards our strategic priorities (i.e., What do we focus on over the next three years to work towards our 10-year strategic priorities and address any other pressing needs?)*** – To begin striving for the agreed-upon ten-year strategic priorities, CBI recommends that the Commission create a three-year “corporate plan” to work towards its identified strategic priorities as well as address other pressing issues of concern. CBI recommends that the Commission consider the following *draft* elements to include in its corporate plan:
- a. *Three-year plans to work towards each of the agreed-on ten-year strategic priorities, with the ability to refresh or review those priorities.*
 - b. *Post-2017 tropical tuna management measures.*
 - c. *Science-based recovery plans for rebuilding overfished stocks of bigeye tuna and Pacific bluefin tuna.*