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**2021 Annual Report of the Executive Director
of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission**

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. WORK OF THE COMMISSION AND SUBSIDIARY BODIES	4
2.1 WCPFC 17	4
2.2 Intersessional activities of the Commission in 2021.....	5
2.3 The Scientific Committee	7
2.4 The Northern Committee.....	9
2.5 The Technical and Compliance Committee	10
2.6 The Finance and Administration Committee	12
2.7 Work of the Intersessional Working Groups.....	12
2.8 Future Work of the Commission and Subsidiary Bodies.....	15
3. WORK OF THE SECRETARIAT.....	16
3.1 Annual overview	16
3.2 Implementation of the Secretariat Corporate Plan	16
3.3 Financial and Administrative Matters.....	33
4. SERVICES PROVIDERS TO THE COMMISSION.....	34
4.1 The Oceanic Fisheries Programme of the Pacific Community (SPC-OFP).....	35
4.2 The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA).....	36
4.3 The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC).....	36
5. CONCLUSION	36

1. INTRODUCTION

1. This report is provided pursuant to Rule 13 of the Commission’s Rules of Procedure. It highlights the main work programmes and activities of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and its Secretariat in 2021. The report follows the structure of the 2020 Report and it describes distinctively the work of the Commission through the engagements of Members, Cooperating Non-Members and Participating Territories (CCMs) and its subsidiary bodies and those activities attributable directly to the Commission Secretariat. The report structure also enables the Secretariat to report on the implementation of the Corporate Plan for the Secretariat 2020 – 2023 acknowledged by the Commission at WCPFC16 as an internal living planning document that guide the work of the Secretariat.

2. **Figure 1** below purports to graphically illustrates the major activities of the Commission and those of the Secretariat in 2021.

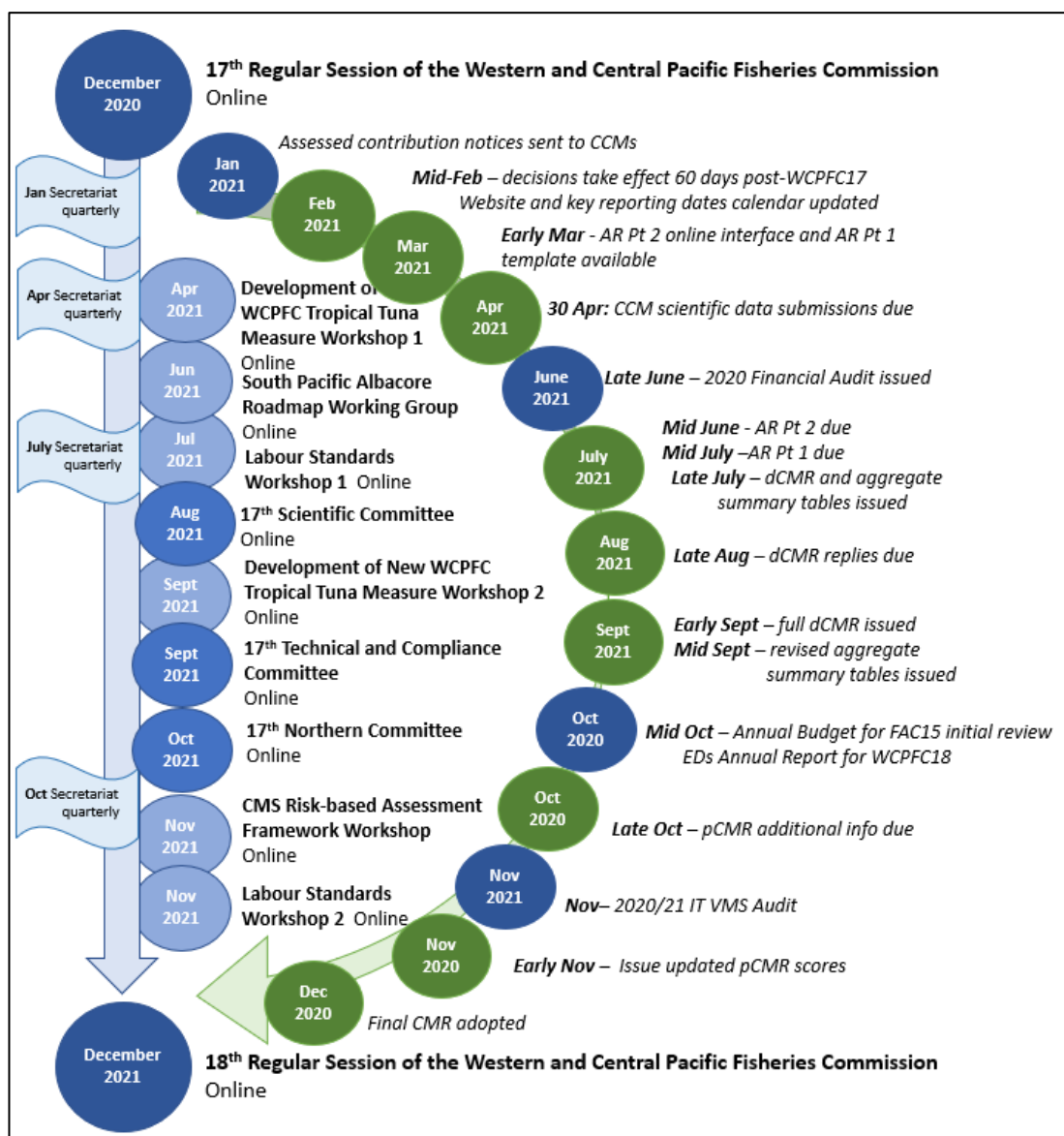


Figure 1 – Major activities of the Commission in 2021

3. The suite of activities and engagements of the Commission and the Secretariat in 2021 as depicted in Figure 1 above bear testament to the busy schedule and heavy workload the Commission carried with the support of the Secretariat during the reporting year despite the continued disruptions caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Under the challenging circumstances and the constraints of transacting business and meetings virtually, the Commission and its subsidiary bodies as supported by the Secretariat had a reasonably successful year. In addition to the regular annual meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, the Commission also convened two workshops to develop a new tropical tuna measure to succeed the current measure which will expire on 15 February 2022. Ultimately, the subsidiary bodies and other intersessional working groups were able to complete and progress their work and are in a position to provide the requisite advice and information the Commission requires to inform its key decisions at WCPFC18 in December 2021 that the Commission must take to ensure continuity of the Commission's operations and functions in 2022 and onward years and to ensure there is no avoidable gaps in the WCPFC conservation and management regime going forward. The key milestones for the reporting period are documented in the succeeding sections of this report.

2. WORK OF THE COMMISSION AND SUBSIDIARY BODIES

4. The Commission has four subsidiary bodies through which the bulk of the work of the Commission is transacted. The subsidiary bodies include the Scientific Committee, Northern Committee, Technical and Compliance Committee, and the Finance and Administration Committee. Their annual meetings in 2021, as usual, were scheduled in advance of the annual session of the Commission (WCPFC18). All the meetings of the subsidiary bodies in 2021 were again convened electronically due to the continued disruptions to international travels caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, the annual WCPFC18 meeting will also be convened electronically in December 2021. The outcomes and recommendations of the meetings of the subsidiary bodies will be tabled and considered for decision by the Commission at WCPFC18.

2.1 WCPFC 17

5. The regular annual meeting of the Commission in 2020 (WCPFC17) like the other meetings of its subsidiary bodies in 2020 was held virtually from 8 to 15 December 2020. The WCPFC17 had 5 meeting days with two days break during the intervening weekend. Each meeting day was for 4 hours inclusive of a 30-minute break, however, there were meeting days that the meeting went over the allotted time.

6. The key outcomes of the WCPFC17 meeting included:
- a) the rollover of the tropical tuna measure CMM 2018-01 for one year and the adoption of CMM 2020-01 which will expire on 15 February 2022;
 - b) the conferral of cooperating non-member status for 2021 to The Bahamas, Curacao, Ecuador, El Salvador, Liberia, Nicaragua, Panama, Thailand and Vietnam;
 - c) the adoption of an IUU Vessel List for 2021, consisting of the same three fishing vessels from previous years;
 - d) the adoption of the Final Compliance Monitoring Report for 2020 covering 2019 activities and the List of Obligations to be reviewed by the compliance monitoring scheme in 2021;
 - e) review of the impacts of the Commission's intersessional decisions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic;

- f) adoption of an updated Indicative Workplan for the Adoption of Harvest Strategies under CMM 2014-06;
- g) adoption of reports of its subsidiary bodies annual meetings SC16, NC16, TCC16 and FAC14; and
- h) approval of the budget for 2021 and endorsement of budget estimates for 2022 and 2023.

7. The Commission at WCPFC17 also approved a substantial intersessional work programme for 2021 and onward years for Members, subsidiary bodies, the scientific services provider and the Secretariat. The work programme include, inter alia:

- a) an elaborate intersessional process to develop a new tropical tuna measure that include the convening of two separate workshops;
- b) various tasks to the Scientific Committee and the Scientific Services Provider on matters pertaining to the implementation of the Work Plan to develop harvest strategies under CMM 2014-06;
- c) agreement to work intersessionally on a process to redeploy observers safely on fishing vessels;
- d) tasking SC17 and TCC17 to provide advice to facilitate a decision by WCPFC18 on the application of paragraph 51 of CMM 2018-01;
- e) continue to explore in 2021 options to convene a science-management dialogue;
- f) tasked the Secretariat to progress in 2021 ongoing enhancements to the compliance casefile system;
- g) intersessional work to be led by Indonesia and New Zealand on labour standards for crews on fishing vessels;
- h) continuation of various dedicated work by intersessional working groups including ERandEMWG, FAD-MO IWG, SPA Roadmap WG, VMS Data Gaps Review WG, and Review of the Transshipment measure IWG; and
- i) progressing of future works under section IX of CMM 2019-06 to enhance the compliance monitoring scheme through the CMS-IWG.

8. The Commission at WCPFC17 decided for its annual meeting to be hosted by Canada who would advise of the venue and date. However, Canada in the middle of the year withdrew its offer to host the meeting due to ongoing disruptions caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic to international travels. The Commission decided out of session to convene a virtual WCPFC18 meeting from 1 to 7 December 2021.

2.2 Intersessional activities of the Commission in 2021

2.2.1 Workshops to Develop a New Tropical Tuna Measures

9. The Commission, as agreed at WCPFC17, convened two virtual workshops in 2021 to develop a new tropical tuna measure to succeed the current measure CMM 2020-01 which would expire on 15 February 2022. The [first workshop](#) was convened on 26 to 30 April and the second one on 6 to 10 September. The first workshop, initiated discussions on the management objectives for the tropical tuna stocks and fisheries. It also determined the information and advice required to be provided by the Scientific Services Provider to further inform the development of the new measure. The [second workshop](#) continued the conversation on the management objectives, and although, there was no consensus reached on the description of the management objectives, there was greater clarity on what is required

to bridge the gaps on the differing perspectives on how to formulate the management objectives. The workshop was also able to progress consideration of the suite of management options, monitoring control and surveillance measures and reporting requirements for the new tropical tuna measure. The outcomes of both workshops are documented in the Chair's Report of the Workshops posted to the workshop webpages on the Commission website. Since the second workshop, the Commission Chair, with the support of the Secretariat, has developed and distributed on 1st October 2021 a Chair's consultative draft of the proposed new tropical tuna measure that reflected the discussions at the two workshops and intersessional consultations. Members were requested to furnish comments on the consultative draft measure by no later than 22 October 2021. The Chair is expected to distribute the Chair's Proposed New Tropical Tuna Measure on 1st November 2021 that accounts for comments and views of Members expressed on the consultative draft for consideration and hopefully adoption at the Commission annual meeting at WCPFC18 from 1 to 7 December 2021.

2.2.2 Intersessional Decisions in Response to COVID-19

10. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact on CCMs and fisheries in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean throughout 2021. At WCPFC17, the Commission decided to continue the process of periodic review and temporary extension of the three intersessional decisions relating to the suspension of certain observer coverage requirements due to COVID-19. These requirements relate to observer coverage on purse seine vessels set out in paragraphs 34 and 35 of CMM 2018-01 and CMM 2018-05, the requirements under paragraphs 13 and 25 of CMM 2009-06 as they relate to observer coverage during at-sea transshipment and in-port transshipment for purse seine vessels respectively. Using the same expedited intersessional decision-making process, the Commission extended the three intersessional decisions until 15 May 2021, then 15 August 2021 and most recently to 15 December 2021.

11. The Commission continues to work towards the development of a process whereby observers can be placed safely back on vessels. To this end, it tasked the Secretariat to gather relevant information from CCMs and prepare a report for TCC17 on the implementation of the three intersessional decisions. The review highlighted that CCMs are placing greater reliance on some of the suspension of obligations than on others. For example, most CCMs did not authorise their purse seine vessels to tranship at sea in 2020, but on the other hand there was an increase in unobserved high seas transshipments. All Pacific Island observers have been repatriated consistent with the suspension of the observer requirement, although some CCM observer programmes have commenced the placement of observers where trips commence and end in home ports.

12. The continued suspension of the observer coverage obligation has longer term MCS and scientific implications. In particular, the Scientific Committee concluded that if the reduced observer coverage continues beyond 2021, there will be increased uncertainty of bigeye and yellowfin stock assessments. After considering these issues, TCC17 recommended that the Commission review through an expedited inter-sessional decision-making process, the possible phasing in of the removal of the suspensions. CCMs emphasised that this would need to be implemented flexibly and be subject to a periodic review in light of changed circumstances. The dynamic and persistent nature of COVID-19 and its variants requires continued assessment and review of the intersessional decisions until such time as observers can be placed safely on vessels without increased risk from COVID-19.

2.2.3 *Intersessional work on labour standards for crews on fishing vessels*

13. The Commission at WCPFC17 agreed to undertake intersessional work regarding the treatment of crew on fishing vessels and to further strengthen observer safety to promote discussion among members and enable the sharing of information, with initial discussion points to be developed in consultation with the Commission Chair and the Secretariat. During 2021, the intersessional work on improving labour standards for crew on fishing vessels has been progressed electronically under the leadership of Ms Putuh Suadela (Indonesia) and Ms Emma Hodder (New Zealand) in consultation with interested CCMs and other stakeholders ([link to labour standards page](#)). In the first half of 2021, the intersessional work was progressed through email communications. On July 13, 2021, a [Workshop](#) on Labour Standards for Crew on Fishing Vessels was convened. TCC17 received a report of progress and recommended that intersessional work continue on improving crew labour standards. On November 18, 2021, a [2nd Workshop](#) on Labour Standards for Crew on Fishing Vessels will be convened. A progress report will be provided to WCPFC18.

2.3 *The Scientific Committee*

14. The Scientific Committee (SC) was established to ensure the Commission obtains for its consideration the best scientific information available.

15. The virtual meeting for SC17 was held for eight days from 11 – 19 August 2021. The abbreviated meeting agenda was guided by the Commission’s priorities, which includes essential items necessary to progress the scientific work of the Commission and to provide necessary information for key decisions of the Commission. The meeting was complemented by posted documents on the SC17 website and by an online discussion forum (<https://forum.wcpfc.int/c/sc-17/18>) which covers issues omitted from the abbreviated agenda.

16. The SC17 meeting was chaired by the SC Vice-Chair Dr Tuikolongahau Halafihi (Tonga) as the Chair Mr Matai’a Ueta Faasili Jr. (Samoa) was unable to attend. Five Theme Conveners facilitated four theme sessions of the plenary meeting: Drs. Valerie Post (USA) for Data and Statistics, Hiroshi Minami (Japan) and Keith Bigelow (USA) for Stock Assessment, Robert Campbell (Australia) for Management Issues, and Yonat Swimmer (USA) for Ecosystem and Bycatch Mitigation Themes. Over 200 delegates participated in the virtual meeting from 31 Members, Cooperating Non-Members and Participating Territories and 18 inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. The *SC17 Outcomes Document* that includes all theme recommendations and administrative decision points of the SC17 was posted on the SC17 website (<https://meetings.wcpfc.int/node/13381>) on 30 August 2021. The Draft *SC17 Summary Report* was posted on the SC17 website (<https://meetings.wcpfc.int/node/13380>), and submission of participants’ comments is due by 27 October 2021.

17. Key outcomes of the SC17 meeting include:

- a) The provisional total tuna catch in the WCPFC Statistical Area for 2020 was estimated at 2,668,063 mt, around 320,000 mt lower than the previous record catch in 2019 (2,988,661 mt). The 2020 total catch represented 80% of the total Pacific Ocean tuna catch of 3,354,965 mt, and 52% of the global tuna catch. The total estimated delivered value of tuna catch declined 16% to USD 4.9 billion in 2020. Detailed fishery

information and economic conditions are available in the meeting document [SC17-GN-IP-01](#).

- b) SC17 recommended publishing aggregated size data via the WCPFC public domain web page, after CCMs have advised SPC by 31 December 2021 on which of their size data to be excluded. SC17 recommended the endorsement of the Draft *Guidelines for the Voluntary Submission of Purse Seine Processor Data by CCMs* to the Commission, and also identified other commercial fisheries that Para 51 of the CMM 2020-01 can be applied to Indonesian and Philippine fisheries.
- c) SC17 reviewed the results of four stock assessments that were conducted in 2021 and key highlights include:
- South Pacific albacore tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*)
The provisional catch in 2020 (69,931 mt) was around 23,000 mt less than the record catch taken in 2017 (93,835 mt). Though the stock is not overfished, the depletion in 2019 ($SB_{2019}/SB_{F=0} = 0.40$) is more pessimistic than the median depletion during 2016 – 2019 ($SB_{2016-2019}/SB_{F=0} = 0.52$), indicating that there has been a substantial decline over the last three years. SC17 recommended that longline catch be reduced to avoid further and extended declines in the vulnerable biomass.
 - Southwest Pacific swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*)
The provisional catch for areas of south of the equator in 2020 was 5,373 mt, showing a continued decline of annual catches since it peaked at 11,128 mt in 2012. As the recent spawning biomass is above both SB_{MSY} and the limit reference point of $20\%SB_{F=0}$ applied to tunas, and recent fishing mortality is below F_{MSY} , the stock is likely not experiencing overfishing and is likely not in an overfished condition. Due to significant unresolved uncertainties, additional caution may be appropriate when interpreting the current assessment outcomes to guide management decisions. As requested by the Commission and SC17, several swordfish projections will be presented for consideration at WCPFC18.
 - Southwest Pacific blue shark (*Prionace glauca*)
SC17 agreed that the 2021 assessment was an improvement on the 2016 assessment, in particular, the catch reconstruction, CPUE time series, and re-parameterization of biological parameters using combined information from south and north Pacific assessments. It is noted that stock biomass is likely increasing, and fishing pressure has declined through the recent decade. The stock assessment results indicate that the stock is not likely to be overfished nor overfishing is occurring. SC17 recommended several technical research areas to improve future assessment.
 - Pacific blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*)
The 2021 stock assessment was conducted by the ISC, IATTC, and SPC scientists. ISC provided that the spawning biomass was about 17% above SB_{MSY} and fishing mortality was about 40% below F_{MSY} . The stock status indicates that overfishing is very likely not occurring and the stock is likely not overfished relative to MSY-based reference points. However, SC17 also noted that the assessment model tends to overestimate biomass and underestimate fishing mortality in recent years, in part due to rapid changes in longline CPUE.
- d) SC17 reviewed potential mitigation measures related to banning shark lines and wire leaders or both to reduce fishing-related mortality on silky and oceanic whitetip sharks. SC17 also recommended the *Draft Best Handling Practices for the Safe Handling and Release of Cetaceans* for further consideration.
- e) SC17 noted the progress of developing WCPFC Harvest Strategy Framework in relation to setting target reference points for the three tropical tuna species,

development of management strategy evaluation and incorporation of a multi-species modelling framework for mixed fishery interactions. SC17 also reviewed the research outputs on limit reference points for elasmobranchs and Southwest Pacific striped marlin and other billfish.

- f) SC17 agreed that SPC's priority scientific services for 2022 would be (i) the skipjack stock assessment; (ii) the yellowfin tuna peer review and additional analyses; and (iii) continuing work to develop the new ensemble approach to characterize stock status uncertainty. In addition, SC17 agreed a scoring system for ranking SC projects, where ranking is derived from the average of the scores allocated by CCMs. Based on the scoring system, SC17 forwarded the ranked work program and budget for 2022 – 2024 to the Commission.
- g) No nominations for a SC Chair and Vice-Chair for SC18 were made, and the CCMs were advised that nominations for these positions would remain open until WCPFC18. SC17 recommended to the Commission that SC18 would be held during 10 – 18 August 2022, and that it had not identified a host country for the meeting if held in person.

2.4 The Northern Committee

18. The Northern Committee (NC) was established to consider and make recommendations on the formulation of conservation and management measures in respect of stocks which occur mostly in the area north of 20° north parallel namely NP albacore, Pacific bluefin and NP swordfish, and on the implementation for the area north of 20° north parallel of such conservation and management measures as may be adopted by the Commission.

19. The 6th Session of the Joint IATTC and WCPFC-NC Working Group Meeting on the Management of Pacific Bluefin (PBF) Tuna (JWG06) was held online from 27 to 29 July 2021. The meeting was opened by co-chairs Mr Masanori Miyahara (NC Chair) and Ms Dorothy Lowman (USA, IATTC). The goal of the meeting is to have the shared responsibility for the management of PBF tuna between the two RFMOs, and to work together to foster common understanding about management objectives and responsibilities.

20. The JWG06 reviewed the stock status of PBF, Member's implementation of the PBF measures, the current IATTC and WCPFC PBF measures for further amendments, amended harvest strategy by incorporating the establishment of harvest control rules for the 2nd rebuilding period, and reactivating management strategy evaluation (MSE) work and Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) Working Group meeting in 2022. There were several agreements on substantial issues and agreed to revisit these to finalize at NC17.

21. The 17th Session of the Northern Committee (NC17) took place electronically from 5 to 7 October 2021. The meeting was chaired by Mr Masanori Miyahara, and attended by all ten NC Members and Observers from six IGOs and NGOs.

22. The NC17 reviewed the outcomes of the JWG06, including two proposals amending CMM 2020-02 (CMM for PBF) and HS 2017-02 (Harvest Strategy for PBF fisheries), which the JWG06 tasked the NC Chair to draft intersessionally with members in advance of NC17. After lengthy discussions and clarifications on the proposals, NC17 recommended that the Commission adopt the revisions of *CMM for PBF* and *HS for PBF Fisheries*.

23. Other key outcomes from NC17 include:
- a) noted to continue the work of MSE for PBF and the development of a catch documentation scheme next year;
 - b) adopted proposed requests to the ISC for PBF analyses, including projections based on the new stock assessment and on catch increases agreed in the revised CMM for PBF;
 - c) reaffirmed the importance of reviewing members' NP albacore catch and effort data, and agreed to continue holding such discussions at future meetings;
 - d) reviewed the progress of developing NP albacore MSE and encouraged members to deepen their understanding of the NP albacore MSE process for further discussion at NC18;
 - e) encouraged to develop a new CMM for NP swordfish for review at NC18; and
 - f) adopted the 2022-2024 Work Programme for the Northern Committee.
24. Japan offered to host the NC18, if a physical meeting is possible, and its venue and time will be informed in due course.

2.5 The Technical and Compliance Committee

25. The Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC) was established to advise the Commission on the technical aspects of implementation of conservation and management measures and compliance with such measures.

26. The 17th Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC17) was convened virtually from 22 to 28 September 2021 (Pohnpei time). The meeting was chaired by TCC Chair, Mr Mat Kertesz and over 340 delegates from thirty-four CCMs, observer organisations and the Secretariat participated in the virtual meeting. Similar to last year, the agenda for TCC17 was prioritised in recognition of the limited plenary time in a virtual meeting setup, and mindful of the need to provide sufficient time in plenary for consideration of the draft compliance monitoring report (dCMR), including a trial process for considering the aggregate tables. The key outcomes of TCC17 are described in the succeeding paragraphs.

27. TCC17 established two small working groups led by TCC Vice-Chair Ms Emily Crigler (USA) that worked via email. The first working group considered the Cooperating Non-Member applications for 2022, and the second working group developed an updated TCC workplan 2022 - 2024.

28. TCC17 committed three and a half sessions to the review of the full dCMR covering 2020 activities prepared by the Secretariat in accordance with CMM 2019-06 (Compliance Monitoring Scheme). The agreed CMS process included consideration of aggregated summaries of information drawn from the online compliance case file system as per paragraph 26(ii) of CMM 2019-06. The review continued to be held in closed session to the exclusion of observer delegations. TCC17 agreed to recommend a provisional Compliance Monitoring Report to the Commission for consideration at WCPFC18. TCC17 recommended that the TCC Chair should lead further intersessional work ahead of TCC18 on a revised process to implement paragraph 26(ii) of CMM 2019-06. TCC17 received a report on progress from CMS-IWG.

29. Due to time limitations, the annual reports of the WCPFC MCS Programmes administered by the Secretariat were taken as read by TCC17, and they covered the Vessel Monitoring System, Regional Observer Programme (ROP), Transshipment Monitoring, High

Seas Boarding and Inspection, Record of Fishing Vessels, Eastern High Seas Pocket Special Management Area, Port State Minimum Standards, Report on the performance of the E-reporting standards and their application, Administration of Data Requests and gaps in Scientific data submissions.

30. TCC17 received a paper prepared by the Secretariat that provided a summary of the available information of the COVID-19 Intersessional Decisions in 2020/21 and potential options relating to the Intersessional Decisions related to COVID-19. TCC17 recommended that WCPFC18 continue the suspensions through the three Intersessional Decisions after 15 December 2021 to 15 March 2022. TCC17 also recommended that the Commission review through an expedited intersessional decision-making process, the possible phasing in of the removal of suspensions, which would need to be implemented flexibly and be subject to periodic review in light of changed circumstances.

31. A report by the Secretariat on updates on streamlining of annual reporting, including on the trial of Annual Catch and Effort (ACE tables), was positively received and TCC17 supported their continuation. For the online compliance case file system, TCC17 noted the update from the Secretariat on the workplan of activities to support and implement a redevelopment of the system as well as the proposed enhancements.

32. TCC17 reviewed information provided by Indonesia and Philippines to inform a Commission discussion on the application of paragraph 51 of CMM 2020-01, and TCC17 provided some views for WCPFC18 consideration. TCC17 received a report on progress from VMS-SWG. TCC17 also recommended that the three vessels currently on the WCPFC IUU vessel list are maintained.

33. The Online Discussion Forum was also used to support advance consideration of some matters that were considered under Agenda 10, Other Matters. TCC17 considered SC17 recommended draft guidelines for voluntary submission of purse seine processor data by CCMs to the Commission, and endorsed the guidelines as amended. TCC17 also endorsed the Best Practices for the Safe Handling and Release of Cetaceans, noting that a revised version would be submitted to WCPFC18.

34. TCC17 noted with appreciation the efforts of the Secretariat to map out the resource implications of future work commitments for the Secretariat's MCS and Compliance Programme. TCC17 supported, in principle and subject to resource availability, the Secretariat's intention to submit to FAC15 a proposed plan that identifies the necessary upgrades to the IMS and securing supplementary dedicated analytical capacity for the Secretariat in 2022 and 2023.

35. A full summary report of the TCC17 meeting will be posted on the Commission website by the time of WCPFC18 and the outcomes and recommendations will be discussed at WCPFC18. The Provisional Compliance Monitoring Report documentation is available to CCMs and their authorized users through the WCPFC intranet and a copy has also been posted on the secure side of the WCPFC website. In accordance with CMM 2019-06 paragraph 41, the Secretariat will table a summary of updates to the compliance scores of CCMs on the Commission website by the time of WCPFC18.

2.6 The Finance and Administration Committee

36. The Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) is responsible for reviewing and advising the Commission on its budget and other financial and administrative requirements.

37. In 2020, the fourteenth regular session of FAC (FAC14) was held online immediately prior to and throughout the course of the WCPFC17 meeting. FAC14 was chaired by Co-Chairs Ms. Camille Movick-Inatio (FSM) and Michael Brakke (USA). The key outcomes of FAC14 include:

- a) recommended to WCPFC17 acceptance of the Auditor's Report for 2019 and General Account Fund Financial Statements;
- b) recommended to WCPFC17 the appointment of Deloitte and Touche LLP for the next 2 years, to undertake the audits for 2020 and 2021 financial statements and accounts;
- c) noted the financial reports on income and trust funds report provided by the Secretariat for 2020;
- d) recommended to WCPFC17 the approval of a 1.7% increase in professional staff salary in 2021 not including the Executive Director; and
- e) recommended to WCPFC17 a \$ 8,190,633 budget for the Commission for 2021.

38. The fifteenth regular session of FAC (FAC15) this year will be held immediately prior to and as necessary throughout the course of WCPFC18. The current FAC Co-Chairs are Ms. Camille Movick-Inatio (FSM) and Michael Brakke (USA). As expected, FAC15 will consider the routine matters relating to the work programme and budget of the Commission for 2022, personnel issues and administrative matters relating to the work of the Commission and the Secretariat. The report and outcomes of FAC15 will be presented for discussion and decision at WCPFC18.

2.7 Work of the Intersessional Working Groups

39. This section of the report highlights the work of the various intersessional working groups tasked by the Commission to progress their work in 2021. The update of the work of the intersessional working groups are summarized in the succeeding paragraphs.

a. Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring Intersessional Working Group

40. The Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring Intersessional Working Group was established in 2014 to consider how electronic monitoring and electronic reporting technologies could benefit the work of CCMs and the Commission, in supporting the objective and implementation of the Convention. The work over prior years had focused on the development of e-reporting standards, and since 2018 the focus has shifted to e-monitoring. The draft TCC workplan 2022-2024 indicates a progress report from the IWG is expected to be provided to TCC18 in 2022 ([link to ER and EM WG page](#)).

b. FAD Management Option Intersessional Working Group

41. The Chair of the FAD Management Options Intersessional Working Group (FADMO-IWG) Mr. Jamel James (FSM), with assistance from the Secretariat, prepared a paper related to *Guidelines for non-entangling and biodegradable FAD materials* for SC17 (SC17-EB-IP-07) and TCC17 (TCC17-2021-19) to progress the work of the FADMO-IWG, noting the

WCPFC17 tasking to SC17 and TCC17 (Paragraph 349, WCPFC17 Summary Report): “Noting that the SC16 and TCC16 could not complete the task in paragraph 22 of CMM 2018-01 due to the limited agenda resulting from COVID-19, the Commission tasked SC17 and TCC17 to review the draft guidelines for non-entangling and biodegradable FADs prepared by the FAD Management Options IWG (Attachment K). The FAD Management Options IWG should revisit the draft guidelines based on input from those bodies as well as any additional scientific and technical information on non-entangling and bio-degradable FADs.” Both papers were posted on the online discussion forum (ODF) of both SC17 and TCC17.

42. Key suggestions from SC17 and TCC17 on the above task include:
 - a) CCMs are supportive of the FADMO-IWG work to be continued;
 - b) the use of non-entangling materials in the construction of FADs be mandatory (no netting shall be used);
 - c) further consideration and research are needed to implement the use of biodegradable materials, noting some research delays due to the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic;
 - d) research on the use of locally available materials for the construction of non-entangling and biodegradable FADs including consideration of the duration FAD materials remain viable and the duration it takes before materials biodegrade and become environmentally acceptable; and
 - e) setting a specific timeframe for requiring non-entangling and biodegradable FADs.

43. The FADMO-IWG Chair intends to further consider and refine as needed the *Guidelines* based on the SC17 and TCC17 ODF and plenary discussions prior to the Commission meeting in December 2021.

c. SP Albacore Roadmap Intersessional Working Group

44. The [2nd meeting](#) of the South Pacific Albacore Roadmap Intersessional Working Group (SPALB-Roadmap-IWG) was convened virtually on 25 June 2021. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Neomai Ravitu (Fiji) with over 80 participants from CCMs and Observers in attendance. The objective of the meeting was to progress the work of the SPALB-Roadmap-IWG to sustainably manage the SPA stock, considering the three priority areas:
 - a) Setting of limits and allocations, particularly on the high seas and compatible with the in-zone limits (setting a total allowable catch/effort) for SPA;
 - b) Improved monitoring and management of the fishery by achieving the SPA TRP on the agreed timing; and
 - c) Development of a new CMM for SPA.

45. Key discussions made at the 2nd IWG meeting include:
 - a) Rebuilding plan, and several catch pathways including faster and slower reductions in catch over 20 years, and consequences for trends in stock status and achieving the interim TRP of 56% of the unfished spawning biomass level;
 - b) The importance of reference time periods for SPA catch pathways and possible catch limits under different trajectories;
 - c) Reduction needs in catch/effort for the SPA fishery to achieve the interim TRP within the agreed timeframe;
 - d) Suggested zone-based limits and management arrangements (TAC/TAE for the SPA) between the high seas and the EEZs and coverage of management area; and

- e) Elements to be considered in the revised/new measure including enhanced monitoring and reporting system.

46. The Chair's Summary Report of the meeting is posted on the SPALB-Roadmap-IWG meeting webpage (<https://meetings.wcpfc.int/meetings/spalb-rm-02>) and the 3rd meeting of the IWG is tentatively scheduled for early November 2021.

d. Compliance Monitoring Scheme Intersessional Working Group

47. The Compliance Monitoring Scheme IWG was established in 2019, under the leadership of the Vice-Chair of TCC, to work virtually to progress work on the CMS Future Work, that are intended to continue to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Compliance Monitoring Scheme (as required by CMM 2019-06 paragraph 46) ([link to CMS IWG page](#)).

48. TCC17 received updates on progress on the IWG which included an updated discussion paper prepared by the lead of the Risk-Based Assessment Framework and a proposal for the working group to meet in early November to test the use of the Risk-Based Assessment Framework in developing the priority list of obligations for assessment in 2022. TCC17 noted the need for a clear pathway to progress the work of the IWG, and tasked the CMS-IWG Chair (the TCC Vice-Chair Ms Emily Crigler) to work with the leads of the work streams to provide advice to WCPFC18 on a workplan for the IWG for 2022. TCC17 while acknowledging the delay in CMS Future Work tasks, reaffirmed the commitment to complete the tasks, and urged the WCPFC18 to take action as needed to allow the TCC to fulfill its function of monitoring and reviewing compliance with CMMs. These ongoing efforts are expected to be progressed by CCMs in parallel under the CMS-IWG.

49. The Risk-Based Assessment Framework Lead, Ms Heather Ward (New Zealand), has announced that a virtual workshop will be held on Wednesday, 10 November 2021 (WCPFC Circular No. 2021/88. The provisional agenda has been posted: <https://meetings.wcpfc.int/meetings/cms-rbaf1> A progress report will be provided to WCPFC18.

e. Intersessional Working Group to review CMM 2009-06

50. The IWG to review CMM 2009-06 (Transshipment CMM) was established in 2018 ([link to the IWG page](#)). The Commission at WCPFC17 appointed Mr. Felix Toa Ngwango (Vanuatu) as co-Chair of the IWG and agreed that Dr. Alex Kahl (United States) would also continue as co-chair. The focus of the IWG has been to develop a Scope of Work for the analysis of transshipment information to support the review of the Transshipment Measure (CMM 2009-06), and this was finalized in March 2021. Through the IWG, the Secretariat and SPC have been requested to utilize a U.S. voluntary contribution to complete the data analysis, however in 2021 priority was necessarily afforded to supporting the intersessional work for the Development of the Tropical Tuna Measure. TCC17 also asked the IWG to consider draft recommendations related to establishing ROP minimum standard data fields for transshipment at sea. The draft TCC workplan 2022-2024 indicates a progress report from the IWG is expected to be provided to TCC18 in 2022.

f. VMS Small Working Group

51. The VMS-SWG to address the VMS data gap and improve the number of vessels reporting to the Commission VMS was established in 2019 ([link to VMS SWG page](#)). TCC17 received a report on progress from VMS-SWG Co-Chairs Viv Fernandes (Australia) and Terry Boone (USA) and agreed to a range of TCC17 recommendations for consideration by WCPFC18. TCC17 also recommended a revised version of the VMS Standard Operating Procedures be adopted at WCPFC18. TCC17 also recommended that WCPFC18 task the Secretariat to provide further information in future TCC VMS Annual Reports on the status of implementing the VMS SWG recommendations.

g. TCC Observer-related Working Group

52. The TCC Observer-related WG was established in 2017 to address two issues: (1) the need for CCMs to obtain copies of observer reports for their vessels in a timely manner so that they may fulfill their responsibility to undertake investigations of possible violations by their fishing vessels and nationals; and (2) observer conduct. The WG's work on the second issue, observer conduct, was completed in 2018. In 2019 the WG continued to work on the first issue, the flow of observer reports and at WCPFC17, the Commission tasked the Secretariat to explore options for enhancing the CCFS through development of a messaging tool through which CCMs can request observer reports and ROP Providers can respond to requests. TCC17 noted the delay of this work to 2022 because of necessary IT platform redevelopment that the Secretariat is currently progressing. The draft TCC workplan 2022-2024 indicates a progress report from the WG is expected to be provided to TCC18 in 2022.

2.8 Future Work of the Commission and Subsidiary Bodies

53. Without preempting the outcomes of the annual Commission meeting at WCPFC18 in December 2021, and hoping that physical meetings will resume in 2022 the issues listed below will feature predominantly in the work of the Commission and the Secretariat in 2022 and onward years:

- a) Implementation of the new tropical tuna measure;
- b) progressing the implementation of the updated indicative work plan for the adoption of harvest strategies under CMM 2014-06;
- c) the skipjack stock assessment, yellowfin tuna peer review and additional analyses, and continuing work to develop the new ensemble approach to characterize stock status uncertainty;
- d) continuation of implementing the 2022 Pacific tuna tagging cruise and the Pacific Marine Specimen Bank (Tuna Tissue Bank) activities;
- e) reforms to further enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the compliance monitoring scheme;
- f) continuation of the necessary upgrades to the Information Management Technology System of the Secretariat, related to CCFS and other externally facing WCPFC ICT application system that rely on SharePoint platform; and
- g) continuation of the work of the various intersessional working groups, in particular around the review of the Transshipment CMM.

3. WORK OF THE SECRETARIAT

3.1 Annual overview

54. The work of the Secretariat in 2021 continued to be challenged by the disruptions to international travels caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic. As a consequence, all Commission meetings were convened electronically using the Zoom online meeting platform. With a year's experience operating under COVID-19 induced operating circumstances, the Secretariat was more adaptable and efficient in its support services to facilitate the successful online meetings of the Commission. The representatives of CCMs this time around were more familiar and comfortable with the use of meeting functionalities of the Zoom online platform. As a consequence of such experience and level of comfort, the online Commission meetings in 2021 were more efficient in their running and better supported by the Secretariat. The Secretariat with continued enhancements to its information technology management system was able to deliver on schedule some of its major online work like the draft monitoring compliance report for 2021 for consideration of TCC17 in preparation for WCPFC18. The Secretariat staff complement continued to be distracted by the absence of some of its staff that continued to be stranded offshore. At the start of this year, there were 4 staff working from offshore but with the controlled opening of the Pohnpei borders two of the staff members were able to return to Pohnpei. Once restrictions to reenter Pohnpei are further relaxed, efforts will be made in conjunction with FSM Foreign Affairs and the national COVID-19 taskforce to permit the remaining two staff members to return to work from headquarters in Pohnpei.

55. Despite the challenges noted above, the Secretariat has a reasonably successful year. Some of the Secretariat's key successes include:

- a) successfully serviced and supported the electronic meetings of the TTMW1 and 2, SC17, TCC17, NC17, Joint IATTC-NC WG on PBF Management, SPA Roadmap IWP and the Intersessional Work on improving crew labour Standards WG.
- b) delivered a new online meeting site with enhanced features to support WCPFCs electronic meetings.
- c) delivered on time the draft compliance monitoring report and enhanced version of the aggregated tables for TCC17 consideration;
- d) supported the online consideration of the draft monitoring report resulting in TCC17 adopting a provisional compliance monitoring report for consideration at WCPFC18, including trialing of the aggregated tables;
- e) continued enhancements to the online Compliance Case File system;
- f) supported CCMs through the online 'WCPFC Helpdesk', through providing guidance in their registration and participation in online meetings, and for Annual Report Part 2, online Compliance Case File System and compliance monitoring report;
- g) supported intersessional activities of five intersessional working groups; and
- h) completed the independent audit report for financial accounts of 2020 despite the inability of the principal Auditor to visit the Secretariat offices.

3.2 Implementation of the Secretariat Corporate Plan

56. The tables below detail the activities and outputs of the Secretariat in 2021, against the Goals and Objectives of the WCPFC Secretariat Corporate Plan 2020-2023, as acknowledged at WCPFC16 as an internal living planning document to guide the work of the Secretariat (see [WCPFC-2019-32](#) and <https://www.wcpfc.int/wcpfc-secretariat-corporate-plan>).

Goal 1: To provide efficient and effective administrative support to the WCPFC

Objective 1.1
Provide secretariat services to the WCPFC and its meetings using internationally recognised standards and best practices

Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>1.1.1 Develop a budget for the Commission.</p> <p>1.1.2 Facilitate and support the implementation of Commission decisions and tasks for the Secretariat.</p> <p>1.1.3 Organise all the meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.</p> <p>1.1.4 Efficiently and effectively manage the funds and assets of the Commission.</p> <p>1.1.5 Prepare annual reports on the activities of the Commission and the Secretariat.</p> <p>1.1.6 Facilitate external audits of the financial records of the Commission.</p> <p>1.1.7 Manage official communications and circulars from and to CCMs and stakeholders.</p> <p>1.1.8 Maintain lists of official contacts for CCMs and stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual budget for 2022 was posted on 15 October 2021 and to be discussed at FAC15 and WCPFC18. ▪ Funds and assets managed as per expenditure statement for 2020 was circulated to CCMs on 28 June (circular 2021/48). ▪ Online meetings were successfully convened for TTMW1&2, SC17, TCC17, NC17, SPA Roadmap IWG, Crew Standards informal WG. ▪ Online WCPFC18 planned for 1 -7 December 2021. ▪ Official communications and circulars properly maintained and accessible on www.wcpfc.int. ▪ Official contact list regularly updated and utilised. ▪ The 2021 Annual Report of the Executive Director on WCPFC MCS and compliance tools tabled at TCC17. ▪ This 2021 Annual Report of the Executive Director to be tabled at WCPFC18. ▪ Auditor’s Report for 2020 and General Account Fund Financial Statements circulated 28 June 2021 and to be considered at FAC15 and WCPFC18.

Summary of annual activities under Objective 1.1

COVID-19 disruptions continued in 2021 and all Commission businesses were transacted through virtual means including all the scheduled meetings of the Commission. With a year of experience working under pandemic induced environment, the Secretariat was able to better deliver the necessary secretariat services in support of the work and meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies in 2021. Online meetings were successfully convened and supported by the Secretariat for the meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, two workshops to develop a new tropical tuna measure and those of some of the intersessional working groups using the Zoom online platform. As may be ascertained from the outcomes of those meetings described under section 2 of this report the meetings were successfully held and delivered the desired outcomes and lay the preparatory work to support the Commission deliberations at WCPFC18 in December 2021.

The 2020 financial statements and accounts were completed, audited and circulated to Members, together with the External Auditor’s Report on the 28 June 2021. This was ahead of schedule despite the inability of the principal Auditor to visit the Secretariat office because of travel restrictions due to the pandemic. Arrangements were made to allow local counterparts of the principal Auditor to undertake the onsite inspections. The Auditor reported that the statements and accounts compiled for 2020 were compliant with the required accounting standards as well as the Commission’s Financial Regulations and presented a fair view of the financial position of the Commission. The Auditor’s report will be presented for the collective review of FAC15 and the Commission at WCPFC18 in December 2021.

The Secretariat was able to provide the requisite annual reports to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies including this annual report and the Executive Director 2021 Report on the performance and status of the various MCS and compliance tools including the Record of Fishing Vessels, High Seas Boarding and Inspection, the Vessels Monitoring System, Regional Observer Programme, Transshipment and the Data Access Rules and Procedure to name but a few of those tools.

Objective 1.2
Ensure an effective, open, harmonious and inclusive Secretariat

Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>1.2.1 Prepare and implement Secretariat work plans in support of Commission activities.</p> <p>1.2.2 Implement performance monitoring and evaluation of Secretariat staff and activities.</p> <p>1.2.3 Implement the Human Resources Management and Development Strategy to ensure the attraction and retention of high-performing employees.</p> <p>1.2.4 Address health and safety issues.</p> <p>1.2.5 Ensure continued staff development and training, in particular, locally recruited staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The second year of the Secretariat Corporate Plan 2020 – 2023 and its implementation is reported through this Annual Report. ▪ A 4 phase COVID-19 Response Strategy continued to guide office work protocols in 2021. ▪ 4 support staff members were supported under the staff training budget. ▪ Assessment under the Policy for the Award of Performance Bonuses will be done in November 2021. ▪ Annual staff performance appraisals were undertaken and annual increments awarded if supported by the appraisals and not at the top of salary range.

Summary of annual activities under Objective 1.2

The Secretariat Corporate Plan 2020 – 2023 accepted by WCPFC16 in December 2019 as an internal planning document to guide the work of the Secretariat continued to remain operative in 2021 and guided the work of the Secretariat. This Annual Report reports on its performance and implementation in 2021. As an organic planning document, the Corporate Plan would be refreshed and updated as needed to ensure it continues to remain relevant and adaptable to evolving circumstances.

While outbreaks of the COVID-19 pandemic and its variants continued to be experienced in various parts of the world in 2021, Pohnpei, remains pandemic free. As reported earlier,

the Moderna COVID vaccines was made available to staff, contractors and families at the Secretariat earlier in the year. Currently 91% of the staff and contractors are fully vaccinated and 94% have at least received one dose of the vaccine. The aim is to have a 100% vaccination rate. Despite Pohnpei remaining COVID free, entry into FSM is strictly controlled, but since May of this year the FSM government commenced regular repatriation flights to repatriate its citizens and residents who were stranded abroad since the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the 4 staff members that were stranded abroad at the start of 2021, two of them were able to return to Pohnpei. Once travel restrictions are further relaxed, attempts will be made to allow the remaining two staff to return to Pohnpei. The Secretariat office continued to observe its 4 phase COVID-19 response strategy that set different office work protocols under each phase with phase 4 where the office is shut down completely when the virus is spreading in the community in Pohnpei.

The Secretariat annual staff performance appraisal programme continued in 2021 and those staff that were assessed to have performed satisfactorily and have not reached the limit of their salary scales were awarded annual increments. For staff that have reached the limit of their salary scales they are not entitled to any further salary increment. In the case of support staff, a performance bonus is on offer if their performances are assessed to be highly satisfactory. In 2020, 3 support staff were awarded for the first time the bonus, the rules for its award were approved in 2020. The assessment for the performance bonus is done in November each year.

The Commission budget for 2020 includes a staff training provision and 4 support staff were approved in 2021 to pursue staff development courses with their course fees met from this budgetary provision.

Due to the travel disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, expatriate staff were not again able to take annual home leave as they are entitled to this year, so the Executive Director has permitted those staff to carry over their unused home leave for future leave travels.

Goal 2: To manage the provision of technical, scientific, and compliance information and advice to the WCPFC

Objective 2.1
Efficiently administer the WCPFC’s MCS and Compliance programme and activities

Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>2.1.1 Serve as the Secretariat to the TCC and its Working Groups, including providing support to the annual compliance monitoring scheme processes and discussion of MCS and Compliance related matters.</p> <p>2.1.2 Administer the technical operation of the Commission’s agreed arrangements for monitoring, control and surveillance which include <i>inter alia</i> the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The online TCC17 was successfully convened and supported with its Outcomes Document issued on time and the Summary Report to be finalised before WCPFC18. ▪ Required annual reports on the Commission’s MCS tools were tabled at TCC17 with an overview report provided through the Executive Directors Overview Report of the WCPFC MCS and Compliance Programmes.

<p>Commission’s Record of Fishing Vessels, Vessel Monitoring System, Regional Observer Programme, IUU Vessel List, High Seas Boarding and Inspection Scheme, Monitoring of high seas transshipment activities and administration of data access rules and procedures.</p> <p>2.1.3 Prepare a draft Compliance Monitoring Report concerning each CCM and collective obligations for review by the TCC, that incorporates information submitted by CCMs and records the final compliance assessments adopted by the Commission each year.</p> <p>2.1.4 Prepare and maintain online annual reporting and compliance monitoring reporting systems for use by Members to fulfil Commission reporting requirements.</p> <p>2.1.5 Maintain the WCPFC online compliance case file system as a secure, searchable system to store, manage and make available information to assist relevant CCMs with tracking alleged violations by vessels, and as decided by the Commission.</p> <p>2.1.6 Compile, analyse and disseminate MCS related data and information on Member’s compliance and fisheries management programs, and convey that advice to CCMs.</p> <p>2.1.7 Research new and emerging technologies and procedures that will enhance the Commission’s MCS efforts and Members annual reporting to the Commission.</p> <p>2.1.8 Implement other approved TCC-related activities including provision of technical advice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Annual Report Part 2 online system was made available for CCMs use on 5 March, which is three months in advance of the reporting deadline of 14 June. SPC-OFP continued delivery of the ACE tables, with enhancements that more fully explored the extent to which annual catch and effort estimates derived from operational level catch and effort data submissions, can be used to support the CMS. ▪ The draft 2021 CMR was issued on time on 29 July and was considered at TCC17. TCC17 has recommended a Provisional CMR to WCPFC18. ▪ An enhanced version of the aggregated summary tables produced from the CCFS was released on 13 August and this accompanied the TCC Chair’s proposed approach for considering the aggregate tables at TCC17. ▪ Guidance to CCMs for Annual Report Part 2, online CCFS and CMRs was enhanced through the ‘WCPFC Helpdesk’. ▪ Report on Secretariat support services to the CMS was tabled at TCC17 (TCC17-2021-08A - Overview of Compliance Monitoring Scheme Matters for TCC17). ▪ Various reference and analytical documents to facilitate the priority work of the TCC17 including the Compliance Monitoring Scheme, were delivered. In 2021, this included exploring the use of thematic categories to support the analysis and presentation of data at across a wider range of levels to reflect systemic, groupings and individual measure level views. ▪ The WCPFC CMS webpages (www.wcpfc.int/compliance-monitoring) were refined to provide more of a one-stop shop for information, including guidance on annual reporting templates and key dates, and reference documents related to the past and present processes to review and enhance the CMS.
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Summary of annual activities under Objective 2.1

Despite, the COVID-19 disruptions, the Secretariat continued to successfully support the work and activities of the WCPFC's MCS and Compliance programme in 2021. The TCC Workplan 2019-2021 continued to guide the work and agenda for the TCC17 meeting. It also guided the Secretariat in its preparations in support of the TCC17 meeting, and the various related working groups.

An overview report of the WCPFC MCS activities was tabled at TCC17 in the Executive Director's Overview Report of the WCPFC MCS and Compliance Programmes (TCC17 working paper [TCC17-2021-05](#)). The said report was supplemented by separate individual reports to be found on the TCC17 meeting webpage on each of the MCS tools including the IUU Vessel List, CNM requests for 2022, COVID-19 related intersessional decisions, VMS, ROP, Transshipment reporting, HSBI, RVF, EHSP special management area, Port inspections and minimum standards for Port state measures, administration of data access rules and procedures, performance of the e-reporting standards.

In 2021, the Secretariat continued to work closely with the VMS-SWG co-chairs, and the recommendations from the small working group, including a revised set of Standard Operating Procedures have been recommended by TCC17 to WCPFC18.

Overall, the 25 observer programmes that are part of the Commission ROP continued in 2020/21 to have their operations curtailed and were not able to operate in a manner that enabled them to place and retrieve observers on most fishing vessels. The latest information available to the Secretariat, via a survey of all Authorised ROP Observer Programmes, confirmed that all Pacific Island Observers that were stranded in foreign ports have been repatriated. Some ROP programmes have recently advised the Secretariat that they are maintaining placements of observers, and these generally begin and end in a vessel's home port.

The suspension of purse seine observer coverage and the requirement for transshipments to be observed increase the risk of IUU fishing. Reported changes in the operational activity of fishing vessels due to COVID-19 precautions mean vessels are staying at sea longer and/or not entering ports, particularly foreign ports, as frequently. This will impact the ability of port states to conduct inspections on vessels that may be identified as a priority for inspection. There have also been fewer high seas at-sea boarding and inspections although there have been an increased level of data requests reflecting member activity across a wider range of MCS tools including port state measures. Port inspections are also likely to be impacted as a result of standard operating procedures for preventing the spread of COVID-19 through person-to-person contact.

The Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS) continued to be at the core of the work of the Commission's Technical and Compliance programme. It provides the platform for the TCC to undertake its key task of assessing the compliance performance of CCMs of their obligations under the WCPFC Convention and CMMs. The CMS is supported by an integrated network of MCS tools and data collection programmes that furnish the relevant data and information to the development and consideration of the CMR by the TCC.

The Secretariat also tabled at TCC17 several reference and analytical documents to facilitate the priority work of the TCC17 including the CMS. They include papers on overview of CMS matters for TCC17, list of capacity assistance requests and capacity development plans, summary of submissions of annual reporting and update on initiatives to streamline annual reporting, update on progress to implement proposed CCFS enhancements, and preliminary

consideration of anticipated forecasts of Secretariat work commitments for TCC 2020 – 2023.

The Secretariat and SPC-OFP continued to support work on streamlining annual reporting. The Secretariat also supported the TCC Chair, TCC Vice-Chair, and leads on the Risk-Based Assessment Framework and the CMS Audit points as sanctioned reforms for the CMS. In March, the Secretariat commenced work to support the WCPFC17-prioritised CMS-IWG future work tasks, that ultimately ensured that the necessary outputs from WCPFC databases were available in a timely manner, to support both the development by the TCC Chair of a proposed process for considering the aggregate tables at TCC17 (issued in mid-August) and the further development by the lead of the Risk Based Assessment Framework of a discussion paper for consideration at TCC17 (issued in mid-Sept) and through a workshop scheduled for mid-November.

With the expected reforms to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the CMS, the Secretariat forecasts an increasing demand on its capacity to deliver those reforms. The reforms necessarily include enhancements to the Information Management Technology System of the Secretariat, related to CCFS and other externally facing WCPFC ICT application system that rely on SharePoint platform. It would also require greater analytical capacity for the Secretariat in the next couple of years, to support the continued refinements of the CMS, to develop automated extraction and IT tools to support the parameters of common data requests to support MCS activities and to further enhance public access to WCPFC scientific data and information, and summary information from MCS programmes. The Secretariat estimates that, to efficiently develop the required analytical products, develop and integrate new processes into Secretariat workflows, and to refresh front-facing web screens and user guidance for members and, where relevant, the public, would require additional short-term resources for around 30-36 months from early 2022.

TCC17 supported, in principle and subject to resource availability, the Secretariats intention to submit to FAC15 a proposed plan that identifies the necessary upgrades to the IMS and securing supplementary dedicated analytical capacity for the Secretariat in 2022 and 2023. The Secretariat is open to consideration of any forms of resources support including short term consultancies, secondment or in-kind support, and looks forward to further discussing the resource implications.

Objective 2.2
Efficiently administer the WCPFC’s Science programme and activities

Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>2.2.1 Serve as the Secretariat to the Scientific Committee and its Working Groups.</p> <p>2.2.2 Facilitate and assist the Scientific Committee in the provision and discussion of its report to the Commission on the best available scientific information and advice on the conservation and management of the stocks.</p> <p>2.2.3 Assist with the development and submission to the Commission of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SC17 meeting was successfully convened electronically (11 - 19 August) with its <i>Outcomes Document</i> posted and a Draft <i>Summary Report</i> distributed for review: (https://meetings.wcpfc.int/meetings/sc17). SC17 Summary Report will be tabled and discussed at WCPFC18. ▪ <i>Scientific Services Agreement with SPC for 2021</i> was finalised and implemented successfully. ▪ The Secretariat reported to SC17 on the progress of 2021 science projects and

<p>workplan and budget for the Science Programme.</p> <p>2.2.4 Administer and monitor the approved science programmes and activities.</p> <p>2.2.5 Facilitate the provision of support to the implementation of the Harvest Strategy Work Plan.</p> <p>2.2.6 Manage relations with the Scientific Services Provider and other scientific experts.</p>	<p>activities, and were discussed on the SC17 online discussion forum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SC17 adopted a <i>Scoring System for the Proposed Scientific Committee Projects</i> and the <i>2022-2024 SC Work Program and Budget</i>. ▪ A dedicated webpage for the Harvest Strategy https://www.wcpfc.int/harvest-strategy is regularly updated. ▪ Secretariat continued to maintain a close and satisfactory working relationship with scientific services providers including SPC-OFP, ISC and other science agencies.
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Summary of annual activities under Objective 2.2

The virtual SC17 meeting was successfully held and delivered the desired outcomes, mindful of the technical constraints and limitations of the virtual meeting setup and its abbreviated agenda. The Secretariat managed the planning and preparation for SC17, including coordinating the development of the agenda and meeting documentation in collaboration with the Scientific Services Provider (SPC-OFP), the SC Chair, Vice Chair and the Theme Conveners. During the meeting the Secretariat assisted the SC Vice-Chair who, in the absence of the SC Chair, chaired the SC17 meeting for the first time. The Secretariat also supported the meeting process by arranging and posting necessary drafts such as draft recommendations on the SC17 website. After the meeting, the Secretariat had the *SC17 Outcomes Document* posted within the requisite timeline and the *Draft SC17 Summary Report* with an Executive Summary was distributed to meeting participants for their review and feedback. The SC17 outcomes will be tabled and discussed at WCPFC18.

Various substantial work of the science programme was carried out by the SPC-OFP in 2021. Therefore, it is imperative that SPC-OFP is adequately resourced to undertake all tasks required to meet the Commission's needs and requests. To that end, the Secretariat was able to finalize early this year the *Scientific Services Agreement* with SPC-OFP for 2021, which defines the work to be conducted by the SPC-OFP and the payment schedule. Accordingly, all scientific services this year will be completed by the end of the Commission meeting in December 2021.

In addition to the scientific services provided by the SPC-OFP, there are science projects and activities implemented by other providers like CSIRO and ISC. The Secretariat played a monitoring and coordination role over these projects for the purpose of providing the best scientific information to the Commission through the SC and NC meetings. For the SC17, the Secretariat presented the progress of those projects and established an online discussion forum for CCMs to review the status of SC projects and activities (<https://forum.wcpfc.int/c/sc-17/18>). The Secretariat also coordinated the development and prioritisation of proposed SC projects for inclusion into the *2022-2024 SC Work Program and Budget*, which has been recommended for endorsement by SC17 to the Commission at WCPFC18.

The science programme supports the implementation of the indicative workplan for development of the WCPFC Harvest Strategy. The SPC-OFP takes the lead in this work with funding support from the government of New Zealand and partially from the Commission.

For 2021, progress on the implementation of the *Harvest Strategy Workplan* was affected by the pandemic-induced disruptions to international travels and by the inability of CCMs to properly discuss and negotiate harvest strategy issues through the online meeting platform. The Secretariat continues to maintain and update a dedicated webpage on its website that tracks progress in the implementation of the *Harvest Strategy Workplan* <https://www.wcpfc.int/harvest-strategy>.

Goal 3: To manage the collection and dissemination of data and information relevant to the work of the WCPFC

Objective 3.1

Collect and disseminate relevant data and information to facilitate the work of the WCPFC and its Members in accordance with applicable rules

Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>3.1.1 Collect data and maintain databases for resource assessments and other information needs to support the work of the Commission.</p> <p>3.1.2 Develop and manage IT tools and solutions to enhance access to data and information.</p> <p>3.1.3 Facilitate consideration by the Commission of emerging and more efficient and cost-effective technologies in data collection and analysis that meet the Commission needs.</p> <p>3.1.4 Administer the collection of quality data from contractors and Members as may be required.</p> <p>3.1.5 Administer the collection of compliance, stock assessment and other data from, and dissemination of such data upon request to, national programmes, scientists, compliance managers, other collaborating agencies and industry bodies.</p> <p>3.1.6 Administer the Commission’s Rules and Procedures for the Protection, Access to, and Dissemination of Data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reports on WCPFC data holdings and data management were provided to SC17 and TCC17. ▪ Summaries of requisite annual reporting under CMMs and compilation of data relevant to CMMs were provided to TCC17 through various meeting papers. ▪ Secretariat continued to support the work of the ERandEM Working Group to develop e-reporting and e-monitoring standards. ▪ Report on the Administration of the WCPFC Data Access Rules and Procedures was provided to TCC17.

Summary of annual activities under Objective 3.1

In 2020/21 the uptake of electronic reporting tools in WCPFC is continuing. Some key highlights in 2020/21 were outlined in [TCC17-2021-RP10](#) for each set of E-reporting standards which includes:

- [E-reporting standards for operational catch and effort data](#) adopted in December 2016 (WCPFC13 Summary Report paragraph 584 and Attachment T);

The submissions of 2020 operational purse seine data that are aligned to the WCPFC E-reporting standards represents 99% coverage, and for 2020 operational longline data, represent coverage of 44% (of all 2020 longline data submitted).

- E-reporting standards for observer data adopted in December 2017 (WCPFC14 Summary Report paragraph 401 and Attachment T)

The submissions of 2020 purse seine observer data held in the WCPFC ROP database that are aligned to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards for observer data represents 100% coverage. The submissions of 2020 longline observer data held in the WCPFC ROP database that are aligned to the WCPFC E-Reporting standards for observer data represents 73% coverage, which is a considerable improvement on 2017 when this coverage level was only 29%, although the longline observer coverage for 2020 was lower than in recent years, due to the impacts of COVID.

- Standards for E-reporting of high seas transshipment declarations and transshipment notices adopted in December 2018 (WCPFC15 Summary Report Attachment S).

Since November 2018 the data entry of high seas transshipment declarations and notices that align to the WCPFC E-reporting standards represent 100% coverage. As is explained in [TCC17-2021-RP10](#) the WCPFC TSER application¹ has been used by the Secretariat since November 2018. In addition, the Republic of Korea and Chinese Taipei have been voluntarily using TSER since February 2020 and September 2019 respectively. In 2019, the proportion of high seas transshipment declarations and notices that were directly entered by CCMs into the WCPFC E-reporting system was 12.6% of all high seas transshipment declarations and notices received by WCPFC, with the remainder being submitted by email and entered by the Secretariat into the WCPFC E-reporting system. As of 31 August 2020, the proportion of transshipment declarations and notices that were directly entered by CCMs into the WCPFC E-reporting system increased to 67% of all high seas transshipment declarations and notices received by WCPFC in 2020 and in 2021 (up to 24 June), is 73%.

In 2021, the Secretariat led a study to identify and assess the high-level options and their potential costs and IT infrastructure for a WCPFC Secretariat role in receiving and managing Electronic Monitoring (EM) camera footage and data from an on-board camera system or data logger system. Transshipment monitoring was the focus for this work. The consultancy was funded from a U.S. voluntary contribution received in 2020 and the Secretariat has worked closely with ERandEM WG Chair and TS-IWG (IWG to review CMM 2009-06) Co-Chairs throughout.

The TCC required annual report (RP08) on [Report on the Administration of the WCPFC Data Access Rules and Procedures](#) confirmed that in 2020/21 the Secretariat has maintained its system of controls over approvals for access to WCPFC data and information. In 2020, the Secretariat received and processed eighty-three (83) requests from Members and others for specific WCPFC data, some of which related to multiple types of WCPFC non-public domain data. So far in 2021, the Secretariat has received and processed 125 data requests. The level of data requests is the highest seen and is likely to reflect the effect of COVID-19. There has been a progressive reduction in the number of observers on vessels since early 2020 through to negligible levels in 2021. There has also been a significant reduction in the level of HSBI particularly during 2020. This seems to

¹ The Application was developed by WCPFC to support CCMs implementation of the E-reporting Standards for high seas transshipment declarations and transshipment notices (TSER) is available for CCMs use on Windows, Android and Apple iOS operating systems.

have been the impetus for the use of alternative approaches to support monitoring of vessels activities which have increased reliance on access to WCPFC data set to support operational activity. Consideration is being given to how the Secretariat can more simply produce data extracts in response to common WCPFC MCS data requests. Currently for WCPFC data, other than VMS and Observer data, the extraction is largely a manual process.

The requisite reports on WCPFC data holdings and data management were provided to SC17 and TCC17 through the following meeting papers: scientific data available to WCPFC, status of observer data management (revision of SC16-ST-IP-01), and update on cannery data with potential use to the WCPFC, and report of the administration of the WCPFC data access rules and procedures.

The summary of annual reporting under various CMMs and compilation of data relevant to CMMs were provided to TCC17 and TTMW1 and may be found on the meeting webpages for those meetings.

Objective 3.2

Acquire and maintain reliable, cost-effective and secure IT systems and infrastructure to ensure the integrity of and access to WCPFC data and information

Activities

- 3.2.1 Develop and manage the Commission’s information management systems, online compliance reporting tools and electronic reporting systems.
- 3.2.2 Research new and emerging technologies and procedures to enhance the Commission’s capacity in the dissemination and conveyance of data and information.
- 3.2.3 Plan for, design, develop and manage the ICT requirements of the Secretariat.
- 3.2.4 Provide ICT support to Commission meetings.
- 3.2.5 Implement the Commission’s Information Security Policy and cyber security program in accordance with internationally recognized standards and best practices.

Annual Outputs

- The Secretariat network maintained internal operations and support to Members at more than 99% systems availability.
- Reports on Secretariat use of IT tools in support of work of the Commission were tabled at TCC17.
- All Commission meetings in 2021 were successfully hosted virtually using the Zoom online platform.
- The Secretariat continue to maintains a fibre optic connection through FSM Telecommunication and a backup satellite connection with Kacific.
- At the time of preparing this report the IT/VMS Security Audit Report is in progress and will be made available to CCMs when it is complete.

Summary of annual activities under Objective 3.2

In 2021, the Secretariat implemented a number of foundational projects designed to ensure the ongoing functionality and reliability of the ICT systems. Many of these projects show little impact on the wider user community but are essential to protect the WCPFC systems from risks and to pave the way for ongoing improvements.

The following list highlights the variety of tasks undertaken in 2021 to improve the ICT ecosystems of the WCPFC Secretariat:

- Active Directory migration to a hybrid on-premise/cloud hosted environment and replacing LDAP authentication with oauth2 allowing a focus on single-sign-on for all WCPFC systems;
- Working with Party Administrator(s) to raise awareness of the role and improving the systems to support their work;
- Enhancements to systems documentation, using an online help system (Freshdesk);
- The meeting management aspects of the WCPFC website is now completely self-contained in a separate dedicated server (meetings.wcpfc.int)
- Upgraded meeting server, e-reporting server, and the VMS Reporting Status systems to Drupal 9;
- Integration of meeting registrations with Zoom for remote meeting support;
- Streamlined updates for ACE tables and more recently the WCPFC Data Catalog; and
- The integration of Zoom with the WCPFC meeting server has been widely used throughout 2021 and has save hundreds of hours of effort managing effective participation in virtual meetings.

The various reports on the Secretariat use of IT tools in support of work of the Commission were tabled at TCC17, including:

- Executive Directors Overview Report of the WCPFC MCS and Compliance Programmes ([TCC17-2021-05](#)) provides an overview of online solutions for CCMs and future IMS priorities;
- Preliminary consideration of anticipated forecast of Secretariat work commitments for TCC in 2022/23 ([TCC17-2021-17](#)) indicates a high level of planning has been undertaken in 2021 to facilitate to work to be completed in 2022.
- TCC Required annual report ([TCC17-2021-RP10](#)) on Administration of the WCPFC Data Access Rules and Procedures confirms that in 2020/21 the Secretariat has maintained its system of controls over approvals for access to WCPFC data and information; and
- Update on progress to implement proposed WCPFC online Compliance Case File System enhancements ([TCC17-2021-12](#)) indicates the plan for moving to a new platform to support to the Compliance Monitoring Scheme, in particular the online Compliance Case File System.

The budgetary provisions of \$100,000 for the WCPFC Information Management System (IMS) developments and \$18,000 for online publishing through the website continue to be used to develop and enhance the IMS hosted databases for CMM reporting at the Secretariat, and for ongoing development the WCPFC online reporting systems, in particular the migration of key IMS systems to a new platform. The Secretariat acknowledges the ongoing support from IMS contractor Taz-E and website contractor Eighty Options to assist the Secretariat with the development and ongoing support provided to the Commissions integrated MCS/Compliance Information Management System and associated online IT tools to date. Continued improvements to the Secretariat IMS remain essential to the servicing of the Commission's Technical and Compliance programme.

Goal 4: To support members, cooperating non-members and participating territories to fulfil their obligations to the WCPFC

Objective 4.1

Efficiently administer available WCPFC resources to support Members to fulfil their WCPFC obligations

Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>4.1.1 Coordinate Commission Members and other stakeholders participation in meetings of the Commission.</p> <p>4.1.2 Administer sustainable financing mechanism under article 30(3) of the WCPFC Convention.</p> <p>4.1.3 Administer Commission’s resources designated to build the technical capacity of members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All available CCMs were supported to attend online meetings of SC17, TCC17, NC17, TTMW1&2, SPA Roadmap IWG, and Crew Standards WG. Similar support in place for participation at the online meeting of FAC15 and WCPFC18. ▪ A report on status of voluntary contributions and trust funds will be presented to FAC15 for onward transmission to WCPFC18. ▪ WCPFC website Article 30 page was maintained as a dedicated webpage for the implementation of Article 30 of the Convention, including to provide CCMs with an easy reference to funding options and application processes. ▪ The Secretariat continued to support the JTF and the CTTF in 2021. ▪ The WPEA-ITM project made steady but disrupted progress in 2021.

Summary of annual activities under Objective 4.1

With continued COVID-19 travel restrictions in 2021, all meetings of the Commission were convened electronically. With a year of experience managing electronic meeting, the Secretariat was more efficient in supporting electronic meetings especially through the Zoom online platform. The Secretariat IT team were able to assist CCMs with technical issues, so CCMs can fully utilize all the functionalities of the Zoom online platform and participate effectively in the online meetings. As noted above, the meetings were successfully held and generally delivered the desired outcomes. The Secretariat Compliance team also provided one-on-one assistance to CCMs in their Annual Reporting, CCFS updates and use of online tools.

At the core of the funding mechanisms under article 30(3) of the WCPF Convention is the Special Requirement Fund (SRF) which usually supported additional representatives to Commission meetings for developing CCMs. However, due to the disruptions to international travels caused by the global pandemic, there was minimal activities funded by the SRF in 2021. The Secretariat, as required, will also present a report to FAC15 on the status of the various voluntary contributions and trust funds for review and onward transmission to WCPFC18 in December. These contributions and trust funds like the Japan Trust Fund (JTF) and the Chinese Taipei Trust Fund (CTTF) were designed to fund dedicated technical activities for small island developing states to build their capacity to participate for effectively in the WCPO fishery.

The Secretariat continued in 2021 to support the implementation of the JTF and the CTTF. The JTF is administered by the Secretariat in coordination with the Japan Fisheries Agency and the available funding for 2021 is USD \$232,821. There were 6 newly approved projects for 2021 from Solomon Island, Tonga and Vanuatu in the areas of training, data collection and Feasibility and Cost-Benefit Assessment of Electronic Monitoring. For the CTTF, it provided USD \$400,000 in funding in 2021 for projects from three members and the PNA office aimed at Observer Recruitment and Training, Electronic Monitoring, strengthening of VMS and training.

The Secretariat, with the assistance of a dedicated Project Manager and SPC, continued in 2021 working with the national fisheries agencies of Indonesia, Philippines and Viet Nam, to implement the New Zealand funded Western Pacific East Asia Improved Tuna Monitoring Activity (WPEA-ITM). The Activity with a budget of USD 3.51 million was extended with at no cost to March 2023 to utilize underspent funds from the early years of the project and more recently by the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to disrupt implementation of the planned WPEA-ITM activities in 2021. With many activities in the Work Plan, involving domestic and/or international travel, COVID-19 related travel restrictions were delayed or where possible, held online. Importantly though, critical national tuna data collection programs have continued with enumerators despite the disruptions, and port sampling continued in all three countries with support of the project. Other critical activities, such as the annual catch estimates workshops were progressed either remotely, in-person or using a combination of both. All three countries met their WCPFC reporting obligations, with the submission of their provisional data to WCPFC on time, and the data audits have shown a continued improvement in data quality and quantity. Given the office closures, travel restrictions, health concerns and other complications, maintaining these core data collection activities throughout 2020 and 2021 is a significant achievement. A mid-term evaluation of the the WPEA-ITM is currently being undertaken to review the effectiveness of the project to date and recommendations are being developed to strengthen implementation of the remainder of the Activity. The Steering Committee will be meeting in November to review the draft mid-term evaluation report and plan implementation details of the Activity in 2022.

Objective 4.2
Provide and facilitate the provision of technical support and assistance to Members to assist them to fulfil their WCPFC obligations

Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>4.2.1 Provide technical assistance to members on MCS and annual reporting requirements as requested.</p> <p>4.2.2 Support efforts, including training, to build national technical capacity to enable members to fulfil their obligations to the Commission.</p> <p>4.2.3 Maintain the Strategic Investment Plan and Article 30 webpage on the Commission website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ List of Capacity Assistance Requests and Capacity Development Plans were extracted from CCM’s Annual Report Part 2 and the draft CMRs. (TCC17-2021-08B) ▪ An updated Strategic Investment Plan for the Special Requirement Fund. ▪ Guidance to CCMs for Annual Report Part 2, online CCFS and CMRs enhanced through the ‘WCPFC Helpdesk’.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Updated and well maintained WCPFC website calendar.
<p>Summary of annual activities under Objective 4.2</p> <p>The Secretariat continued in 2021 to assist CCMs with the compilation of their Annual Report Part 1 and 2 Reports, by responding to specific questions and queries. In particular, the Secretariat compliance team was able to work with and assist many CCMs electronically with their Annual Reports Part 2, draft CMR reporting and WCPFC online Compliance Case File system-related work. The assistance will continue as CCMs continue to familiarize themselves with the enhanced system and the changes being made to improve its usefulness and ease of use based on CCM feedback. The direct assistance provided was supplemented through the WCPFC Helpdesk.</p> <p>Secretariat also continued to electronically assist CCMs with their queries related to the implementation of MCS tools, including Regional Observer Programme, VMS, HSBI, Data Requests, Transshipment Reporting and Port State Measures. SPC-OFP, as WCPFC Scientific Data Manager, worked with the Secretariat to electronically assist CCMs with their scientific data submissions.</p> <p>The Secretariat in collaborations with CCMs was able to discern a list of capacity assistance requests and capacity development plans from CCM’s Annual Reports Part 2 and the draft CMRs in 2021. The list identifies the areas that CCMs require capacity assistance and what resources and assistance required to respond to those requests. The assistance requests in 2021 would be finalized as part of the Final CMR for 2021 at WCPFC18.</p> <p>As required the Secretariat would present to WCPFC18 in December an updated Strategic Investment Plan that would reflect the development assistance needs of developing CCMs as identified through the compliance monitoring scheme processes in 2021 and match them with potential sources of resources to address those assistance requests.</p>	

Goal 5: To promote awareness and publicise the work of the WCPFC	
Objective 5.1 Effectively raise awareness of the WCPFC and its initiatives	
Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>5.1.1 Implement a communication strategy to promote awareness of the work of the Commission.</p> <p>5.1.2 Represent the Commission at regional and international meetings and other forums.</p> <p>5.1.3 Maintain close collaborations with international and regional organisations and RFMOs in particular the tuna-RFMOs and those with management mandate within the Pacific Ocean.</p> <p>5.1.4 Maintain regular communications with members and stakeholders through</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attendance at other t-RFMOs meetings. ▪ Attendance at governing council meetings of FFA. ▪ Attendance at regional and international technical workshops and trainings. ▪ Collaborations with other RFMOs and other relevant international organisations and entities. ▪ Providing communal support in FSM.

<p>official circulars and regular country visits.</p> <p>5.1.5 Entertain regular visits by members and stakeholders to the Commission head office.</p> <p>5.1.6 Maintain a community outreach programme.</p>	
<p>Summary of annual activities under Objective 5.1</p> <p>The Secretariat’s attendance at regional and international meetings in 2021 was limited due to the continued impact of global COVID-19 pandemic on international travels. The Secretariat’s participation at some of the meetings was through virtual means.</p> <p>The Executive Director and senior managers participated in the online governing council meetings of the FFA both at the official and ministerial levels. The Secretariat also attended, virtually, these technical meetings of the FFA namely, the FFA Regional COVID-19 Awareness Workshop (January), the PNA Observer Coordinators Meetings and FFA/SPC Regional Observer Coordinators Workshop, the FFA Inaugural Catch Documentation and Enhancing Compliance Workshop, the FFA MCS Working Group (March). The Secretariat participated, virtually, at the SPC organised meetings namely, the SPC Tuna Data Workshop (April), the pre-assessment workshop, the pacific tuna tagging programme related meetings and the Close-Kin Mark-Recapture seminar.</p> <p>Collaborations with other tuna RFMO Secretariat compliance counterparts and the International MCS Network have continued through the Tuna Compliance Network (TCN) which is currently chaired by the Secretariat Compliance Manager Dr Lara Manarangi-Trott. In late 2020, similar informal collaboration commenced with the support of the International MCS Network, amongst Fisheries Secretariat Compliance counterparts with areas of responsibility in the Pan Pacific region (CCAMLR, CCSBT, IATTC, NPAFC, NPFC, SPRFMO and WCPFC). The future activities of the Pan Pacific Compliance Network group are currently under development.</p> <p>The 2020 TCN initiative to assist RFMO Secretariats with collaborating and sharing information about changes to each RFMOs respective IUU vessel lists has continued to be one that several RFMO Secretariats throughout the world have found to be a helpful resource. This initiative is intended to support the RFMOs with IUU Vessel List cross-listing procedures which require consideration of other RFMOs IUU vessel lists and changes therein. Currently links are included on the WCPFC website to other IUU Vessel lists [https://www.wcpfc.int/wcpfc-iuu-vessel-list].</p> <p>In late 2020, the TCN with support from FAO ABNJ Project and International MCS Network has commissioned a desktop study supporting the TCN to conduct an analysis across the existing Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) and relevant Compliance Monitoring Scheme processes of the five tuna RFMOs. The study, which is led by FAO Consultant Sarah Lenel, commenced in January 2021 and is currently in a second phase to be completed in the first quarter of 2022. The study is designed to contribute specifically to share lessons learnt and experiences in the areas of Secretariat support to each tuna RFMOs respective compliance monitoring processes.</p>	

The Secretariat participated in informal collaboration commenced with the support of the International MCS Network, amongst Fisheries Secretariat Compliance counterparts with areas of responsibility in the Pan Pacific region (CCAMLR, CCSBT, IATTC, NPAFC, NPFC, SPRFMO and WCPFC). It also attended the APEC Workshop on implementation of Port State Measures under the APEC Roadmap on Combatting IUU Fishing, Convention on Migratory Species - 4th Meeting of Signatories to MOU on Conservation of Cetaceans in the Pacific Islands region (SPREP), FAO-CITES Sub-regional Workshop on implementing CITES through national fisheries legal frameworks. In July 2021, the Secretariat participated in the IMCS Network Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop (GFETW).

In March 2021, the Compliance Manager, Assistant Compliance Manager, Legal Adviser and TCC Vice-Chair joined forty expert participants in the Second PEW/ISSF Virtual Expert Workshop on Best Practices in Compliance in RFMOs. This Workshop, also held under Chatham House Rule, focused on the role of transparency in improving RFMO compliance. The workshop commenced with an expert Panel discussion, which included Secretariat Legal Adviser Dr Penny Ridings. A series of working group sessions then met during three consecutive days. The workshop was a valuable opportunity for more in-depth discussions about the roles and functions of transparency in RFMO compliance processes and understanding its facets in the context of RFMO compliance review mechanisms. A third workshop is scheduled for early November 2021 with a focus on Outcomes of Compliance Review Processes.

The Secretariat continued to support communal activities in 2021 including sponsorship of a fishing tournament, a tennis tournament, a national law society debate, national education day, Pohnpei world tuna day celebrations, and Pohnpei public health COVID outreach. The Secretariat also availed its Annex building for meetings locally organised by NORMA, Micronesia Red Cross, SPC, International Organization for Migration, and Pohnpei state Fisheries & Aquaculture Office.

Objective 5.2

Maintain a robust website and other electronic publications to disseminate widely the work of the WCPFC and Secretariat

Activities	Annual Outputs
5.2.1 Maintenance of a modern and accessible website for the Commission containing relevant and updated information on the work of the Commission 5.2.2 Publication of the Secretariat's quarterly electronic newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ www.wcpfc.int regularly updated. ▪ Issued four editions of the e-newsletter in 2021.

Summary of annual activities under Objective 5.2

The Secretariat continues to maintain and regularly update its www.wcpfc.int website in 2021.

The Secretariat continued to publish and distribute its electronic newsletters with quarterly updates in 2021. The newsletter provides updates and news on the work of the Commission and the activities of the Secretariat. Its distribution list covers a broader

spectrum including subscribers beyond officials and representatives of CCMs and observers of the WCPFC.

3.3 Financial and Administrative Matters

57. As earlier noted, the 2020 financial statements and accounts were completed, audited and circulated to Members on 28 June 2021 (Circular 2021/48), together with the External Auditor's Report. The Auditor reported that the statements and accounts compiled were compliant with the required accounting standards as well as the Commission's Financial Regulations and presented a fair view of the financial position of the Commission. The Auditor's report will be presented for the collective review and final consideration of WCPFC18 in December 2021.

58. The staff establishment at the Secretariat remained stable at 24 staff comprising of 9 positions for professional staff including the Executive Director, and 15 positions for support staff. In addition to the staff, the office has an additional 13 contractors that work as cleaners, gardeners and guards for the office. With COVID disruptions, the IT Manager Mr Tim Jones and the Assistant Compliance Manager, Ms Eidge Sharp have continued to work remotely for the year with the continued travel difficulties. The ROP Coordinator, Mr Karl Staisch was able to return to Pohnpei, FSM in October 2021 after being off island for nearly two years.

59. With the expected reforms to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the CMS, the Secretariat forecasts an increasing demand on its capacity to deliver those reforms. The Annual Work Programme and Budget for 2022/24 includes provision for additional short-term resources to enhance the analytical capacity of the Secretariat in 2022 and 2023. The Secretariat expects that the short-term resources would assist the Secretariat to develop the required analytical products, develop and integrate new processes into Secretariat workflows, and to refresh front-facing web screens and user guidance for members, and where relevant, the public. The Secretariat is open to consideration of any forms of resources support including short term consultancies, secondment, or in-kind support, and looks forward to further discussing the resource implications.

60. The Secretariat continued to use the QuickBooks Enterprise as the Commission's financial management system. Maintenance of the headquarters building services and grounds continued to be a challenge, however, by implementing a regular maintenance schedule of the buildings and grounds as supported by regular annual budgetary allocations ensured that those properties and assets continue to be in good order.

61. The Secretariat continues to implement its green policy as it continues to look for initiatives to reduce the impacts of its operations on the environment. The Secretariat maintained its existing solar panels. The saving for 2021 from the use of solar energy is estimated at around \$84,000.

Trust Funds

62. The Commission continued in 2021 to receive voluntary contributions from member states and multilateral organisations to support the work of the Commission. These are on top of the assessed contributions of member States that supported the core budget for 2021. The following voluntary contributions were gratefully received by the Commission from:

- a) China - \$24,000 to the Special Requirements Fund (SRF);
- b) European Union – ongoing conversations on a voluntary donation related to RFV FLUX compatibility;
- c) Japan - \$232,821 for the Japan Trust Fund to support capacity building projects in fisheries statistic, regulations and enforcement in small island developing states;
- d) Korea - \$167,936 for the Tuna Tagging Project;
- e) New Zealand - \$1,280,293 for the West Pacific East Asia Sustainable Tuna Management Project;
- f) Chinese Taipei - \$400,000 for the Chinese Taipei Trust Fund to support capacity building in the fisheries sector in small islands developing states;
- g) United States of America - \$40,000 for a contribution to the Special Requirements Fund (SRF), \$40,000 for training for WCPFC-IATTC cross-endorsed observers and \$5,000 for the development and distribution of graphics illustrating the new cetacean bycatch guidelines; and
- h) ISSF – \$17,000 for research on non-entangling and biodegradable FADs.

Information Technology Systems

63. As in previous years, the Secretariat network maintained internal operations and support to member States at more than 99% systems availability. The information and communication technology systems at the Secretariat are serviced by two full time staff, one professional and one support staff. Additional support for hardware infrastructure, website development, systems analysis, and application development are sourced from four key external partners.

64. The global pandemic induced travel disruptions continued to placed additional demands on the Secretariat’s ICT infrastructure with more demand on online transactions, remote work and meetings. The network firewalls, email gateway and remote desktop infrastructure were able to meet the additional demands required to support the levels of remote working (both in terms of staff working from locations outside of Pohnpei and during the different phases of the office COVID protocols).

65. In addition to the hardware and network infrastructure, the ICT team have been actively supporting the Compliance and Science teams with various enhancements to the online application portfolio. The major application development in 2021 was the upgrade and enhancements to the WCPFC meeting platform.

4. SERVICES PROVIDERS TO THE COMMISSION

66. When the Commission was established in 2004, the Convention that established it acknowledged that some of the functions expected of the Commission were already undertaken by then existing regional organizations and arrangements. So, the Commission was encouraged to take advantage of those exiting capacities and avoid duplicating the same capacities. The Commission continued in 2021 to maintain contractual arrangements with other regional organisations for the provision of certain services on behalf of the Commission. These arrangements are explained in the succeeding paragraphs

4.1 *The Oceanic Fisheries Programme of the Pacific Community (SPC-OFP)*

67. The SPC-OFP as the designated Scientific Services Provider for the Commission continued in 2021 to conduct data management, statistical analysis, stock assessments and related analytical services, management analyses and member performance monitoring, and other advisory and technical services as may be required by the Commission.

68. The SPC-OFP produced around 55 papers and reports for SC17, covering all four thematic areas of the SC17 plenary agenda, steering committee meetings for the Pacific Tuna Tagging Project (PTTP) and WCPFC Tuna Tissue Bank Project and online discussion forum topics, and also provided *ad hoc* advice and support throughout the year, including a seminar on the close-kin mark-recapture technique. In addition, the SPC-OFP assisted the following activities:

- a) participated in TCC17 and the 1st and 2nd Tropical Tuna Measure Workshops, producing several additional analyses, key scientific papers and presentations for each meeting;
- b) assisted the WPEA Project by supporting the electronic meetings of the data review and annual catch estimates workshops in Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam, ongoing database system, and data management;
- c) conducted the 2021 Central Pacific tagging cruise (CP15) targeting conventional tag releases of bigeye and yellowfin tuna associated with TAO² moorings and dFADs and archival tag releases of bigeye tuna and, fishing permitting, skipjack tuna in association with dFADs;
- d) convened electronically the 15th PTTP Steering Committee meeting and three PTTP Cruise Planning Advisory Committee meetings;
- e) continued the biological sampling programme, continued to curate and facilitate access by researchers to samples contained in the WCPFC Tuna Tissue Bank, and hosted the electronic 3rd WCPFC Tuna Tissue Bank Steering Committee meeting;
- f) hosted the online 15th Tuna Data Workshop to assist compilation of CCM's tuna fishery data;
- g) provided support to Secretariat on reporting related to the CMS and other related work for TCC17;
- h) actioned various requests for access to WCPFC data, as approved by the WCPFC Executive Director;
- i) hosted the online Pre-assessment Workshop for 2021 South Pacific albacore, southwest Pacific swordfish and southwest Pacific blue shark stock assessments;
- j) provided technical analyses, reports and presentations to the South Pacific albacore roadmap intersessional working group meetings in 2021;
- k) commenced the data compilation and analysis related to transshipment information in support of the review of CMM 2009-06, to be completed in early 2022;
- l) continued to enhance the WCPFC scientific public domain data products; and
- m) enhanced the tables on Annual Catch and Effort Estimates (the "ACE tables" <https://www.wcpfc.int/ace-by-fleet>) to include:
 - additional estimates of effort where it is practicable to be derived based on the April 30 scientific data submissions from CCMs and provide an update to SC17; and
 - estimates of annual area-based CMM quantitative limits where it is practicable for the estimate to be derived based on the April 30 scientific data submissions from CCMs and to provide an update to TCC17.

² Tropical Atmosphere Ocean

4.2 *The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)*

69. The Commission continued its association with the FFA through its service level agreement for VMS services, and since 30 June 2016, the service provider used by FFA has been TrackWell (www.trackwell.com). The Pacific VMS system continued to operate as two separate and distinct entities to protect the integrity of the Commission VMS data and the FFA VMS data. Currently there are almost 2,640 vessels reporting to the Commission VMS, and nearly 40% report through the FFA VMS system with position transfer to the WCPFC (the Commission separately maintains VMS contracts for airtime services for positions from the WCPFC-VMS direct reporting vessels). The Commission VMS system under the services level agreement provided continued ongoing support to routine VMS services, “flick the switch” implementation and members’ high seas MCS operations.

4.3 *The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC)*

70. The ISC is the designated scientific services provider for the Northern Committee. In that capacity the ISC on request would provide scientific information and advice on tocks under its competence to the annual meetings of the Northern Committee, Scientific Committee and the Commission.

71. The Secretariat attended the 21st Plenary Session of the ISC (ISC21) which was held virtually using the MS Teams platform from 13 to 20 July 2021 Pohnpei time. Dr John Holmes (Canada) chaired the meeting. The Plenary was attended by Members from Canada, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico and the United States as well as the IATTC, and Observers. Key outcomes of the ISC21 include:

- a) the 2021 Pacific blue marlin assessment showed that the stock is very likely not overfished and overfishing is very likely not occurring relative to MSY-based reference points;
- b) an indicator analysis for North Pacific shortfin mako shark endorsed the conclusion that there were no obvious signs of shifts in abundance or fishery dynamics;
- c) no changes in stock status and conservation information provided at ISC20 for NP albacore, PBF, WCNPO swordfish, EPO swordfish, Pacific blue marlin, NP blue shark, and NP shortfin mako shark;
- d) the benchmark stock assessment for both NP striped marlin and NP blue shark, and an update assessment for Pacific bluefin tuna are planned to be completed in 2022;
- e) review of the Final Albacore Management Strategy Evaluation Report based on five workshops over six years (2015-2020); and
- f) the next ISC Plenary will be hosted by the United States in Kona, Hawai’i, July 12-18, 2022.

5. CONCLUSION

72. The new norm of transacting business through electronic means necessitated by the disruptions caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic continued to be the modus operandi for the work of the Commission and its Secretariat in 2021. Therefore, all the meetings of the Commission in 2021 were once again convened using the Zoom online platform. With a year of experience functioning through that medium the meetings were managed more efficiently

than last year as meeting participants were also more familiar and accustomed to the Zoom online meeting platform. This is evident in the substantial outcomes of the meetings as described in this report. The Commission at its online annual meeting at WCPFC18 from 1 to 7 December 2021 should have all the necessary information and advice that it requires to consider and decide on the essential decisions the Commission needs to take to ensure the continuation of its core roles and functions in 2022 and onward years and to make sure there is no avoidable gap in the WCPFC conservation and management regime. This report documents once again the resilience and adaptability of the Commission and its membership in response to new norm of doing business. 2021 was another hugely successful year for the Commission despite all the challenges and difficulties the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic presented.

73. The WCPFC18 is invited to discuss and note the report.