

**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

**FIFTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

12-20 August 2019

**REPORT OF THE JAPAN TRUST FUND STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

**WCPFC-SC15-2019/ RP-JTF-02**

**18 August 2019**

**SECRETARIAT**

**JAPAN TRUST FUND**

**2019**

**REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

1. **INTRODUCTION**
2. The Steering Committee (SC) meeting of the Japan Trust Fund (JTF) was held on Wednesday 14 August 2019, in the margins of the Fifteenth Session of the Scientific Committee (SC15). The meeting was chaired and convened by the Science Manager, SungKwon Soh, with support from Japan, Hirohide Matsushima. Aaron Nighswander served as a rapporteur. The list of participants is in **Attachment A**.
3. The Steering Committee’s role is to review the performance of projects and discuss with the view to resolve any project implementation issues and to share experiences in the implementation of projects and learn from those experiences.
4. **OPENING OF MEETING**
5. The meeting was opened at 5:40 by the Chair, and the adopted agenda is in **Attachment B**.
6. **REVIEW OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE**
7. The Steering Committee received updates on the status of implementation of each of the ongoing projects supported by the JTF. The brief report is in **Attachment C,** and highlights are described below.

***2019 PROJECTS***

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

1. This project was to support a comprehensive review of MMR’s Competent Authority programmes to ensure that current systems respond to the needs of MMR’s fisheries management. Cook Islands noted that the MMR Bill is currently undergoing stakeholder consultations which has delayed the development of the HACCP regulations. The work of this project is ongoing. **Cook Islands requested approval to carry over the funds for an additional year. Japan agreed to the extension.**

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

1. Currently a request for a tender process exemption from the Government Tender Committee to enable the use of funds for consultancy (over HoM discretionary level). With assistance from FFA, a consultant from International Environmental Law Project was identified to deliver courses. The planning on materials and course content is ongoing. **Cook Islands requested approval to carry over the funds for an additional year. Japan agreed to the extension.**

**Tonga:** *LL Observer training*

1. Tonga completed the trainings for seven observers. Out of the seven, three were selected for full PIRFO training.

**Tonga:** *Port sampling and data entry*

1. This project will continue until the end of 2019. Data collection is currently implemented with port sampling, data entry and reporting.

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

1. The recruitment of a new legal assistant has been completed last month and the rest of the proposed items will be implemented later this year. Sufficient funds are available for these activities to complete before the end of the project.
2. Due to the differences in money exchanges from USD to Tongan Pa’anga (TOP), there will be an unspent fund from the projects by the end of the year. Tonga is seeking approval to:
3. To utilized remaining fund in related activities from the current proposal; and
4. To help with the data collection equipment and related materials for port sampling and observer program.

**With regards to a), Japan agreed to the proposal, in the understanding that the activities would be conducted under the current projects, which were approved to be extended until next year. Japan also agreed to the proposal b), on the conditions that the purchases were limited to goods or supplies which are necessary to implement the port sampling and observer program under the current projects.**

***CARRIED-OVER PROJECTS FROM PREVIOUS YEARS***

**Fiji:** *The Fiji Port Monitoring Exercise*

1. There have been delays in receiving the funding from the Ministry of Economy [MoE] after request for roll over from 2018 - 2019 financial year. In addition, Fiji could not recruit ROP Observers and the use of boarding and enforcement officers to carry out port monitoring. **Fiji requested approval to carry over the funds for an additional year. Japan agreed to the extension.**

**Nauru:** *Capacity building and transfer of technology on at sea boarding and inspection procedures for Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority (NFMRA) vessel operators in Nauru’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)*

1. The project has not been implemented yet, but conformed that a boat necessary for the project were already secured. Nauru is to provide additional information on the project as the key staff are not present at the meeting. **Nauru requested for approval to carry over the funds for an additional year. Japan agreed to the extension.**

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

1. The initial request for funding was covered by outside sources and the funds received from Japan were not required. Tuvalu is proposing to run similar training/workshop to make use of this funding, and to extend the capacity within the Tuvalu Fisheries Department, Maritime Police officers and other relevant stakeholders on HSBI. **Tuvalu requested approval to carry over the funds for an additional year. Japan agreed to the extension.**
2. **OTHER ISSUES**
3. Cook Islands asked if extra funds are available from underspends on some projects, could those underspends be reallocated to other projects. The Secretariat explained the difficulty in having countries return relatively small amounts of unused funds from the national accounts.
4. FFA asked if there were any remaining funds from this 2019. The Chair explained that the full budget was allocated to projects. FFA asked if project variation is allowed. Japan explained that they would probably be allowed but it would need to be handled on a case by case basis.
5. The grant recipients, the Steering Committee and the WCPFC Secretariat expressed appreciation to Japan and the Japan Trust Fund for their generous support and assistance in strengthening the capacity of developing states.
6. **CLOSE OF MEETING**
7. There being no other matters, the Chair closed the meeting.

**Attachment A**

**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

**FIFTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**

**JAPAN TRUST FUND STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

14 August 2019

**List of Participants**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Country/Agency** | **Name** | **Emaill** |
| Cook Islands | Marino Wichman | m.wichman@mmr.gov.ck |
| Cook Islands | Chloe-Ane Wragg | c.wragg@mmr.gov.ck |
| Fiji | Shelvin Sudesh Chand | chand13.shelvin@gmail.com |
| JTF Representative | Hirohide Matsushima | hiro\_matsushima500@maff.go.jp |
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| WCPFC (Chair) | SungKwon Soh | sungkwon.soh@wcpfc.int |
| WCPFC | Aaron Nighswander | aaron.Nighswander@wcpfc.int |
| WCPFC | Lara Manarangi-Trott | lara.Manarangi-Trott@wcpfc.int |

**Attachment B**

**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

**FIFTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**

**JAPAN TRUST FUND STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

14 August 2019

**AGENDA**

1. **Opening of meeting**

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1. Chair and Rapporteur
2. Adoption of agenda
3. Introduction of participants
4. **Review of projects performance**

The Steering Committee (SC) will review the performance of year 2018 projects, and those projects carried over from previous years. All countries and agencies that received JTF support for their projects should participate in the SC Meeting and provide brief status report on the implementation of their projects, including their outcomes and effectiveness. Final reports should include a financial statement of how the funds have been spent.

JTF 2019 funded projects and those from previous years are detailed in WCPFC-SC15-2019/ RP-JTF-01 (Japan Trust Fund Status Report).

1. **Other matters**
2. **Close of meeting**

**Attachment C**

**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

**FIFTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**

**JAPAN TRUST FUND STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

14 August 2019

**Country Reports**

1. **JTF Progress Report from Cook Islands**

* The JTF steering committee approved two projects for the Cook Islands in late March, with funds transmitted in April 2019. These are:
  + Development of National Competent Authority (HACCP Strategy) for Cook Islands Offshore Fisheries
  + Improving the participation and engagement in international fisheries forums
* **Development of National Competent Authority (HACCP Strategy) for Cook Islands Offshore Fisheries**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Proposed work** | **Progress report** |
| **MoU** – Develop and finalise a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Health and MMR to provide legal powers to MMR as a CA | Work on going, progress has been slow, but hope to have this completed by years end. |
| **HACCP Strategy** – Development of a national HACCP strategy | Identifying suitably qualified consultants being undertaken. This will include the need for consultation and review by FFA |
| **Implementation plan** – Development of an implementation plan for the HACCP strategy, including completion of Part 2 training | As above, this work will be done as part of the HACCP Strategy.  Two staff nominated (one to be funded through this project), but only one staff member accepted for Part 2 training (with FFA), requires access to training in next year’s cohort. Staff that have completed Part 1 training continue on the job training with qualified staff, through vessel and site inspections. May require in-country training for more effective training delivery. |
| **Regulations** – Develop and finalise regulations, standards, policies and a CA Checklist | Development of regulations deferred as new Bill development takes priority. However, policies and standards including CA checklist to be developed once consultant identified. |
| **Calendar** - Finalise Competent Authority training and implementation calendar for 2019 | Calendar still being developed, modified depending on staff availability and access to training resources. Staff vacancies to be filled will include new staff to be trained. |
| **Awareness** – Create awareness and education information packs for stakeholders and the general public on CA requirements, standards and legislation etc. | Yet to commence. Will be done once policy completed. |
| **Consultation** – Hold consultations with stake holders and the general public on CA work | Some consultation undertaken with industry, however further engagement planned, once consultant comes onboard. |
| **Inspections** – undertake inspections to train fisheries officers on HACCP CA requirements | Two undertaken this year. Another one planned for second half of this year. |

* **Improving the participation and engagement in international fisheries forums**
  + MMR is seeking a tender process exemption from the Government tender committee to enable the use of funds for consultancy (over HoM discretionary level). Consultant from International Environmental Law Project identified, with assistance from FFA (Viv) to deliver courses.
  + Planning on materials and course content ongoing.
  + Timing for delivery over two week period difficult to lock down with competing interests.
  + Interest in course shown from other countries.

1. **JTF Progress Report from fini**

**Overview**

Fiji as a Port State carries out certain port activities for all vessels visiting Fiji. One of these activities is the supervision of catch that is landed into Fiji’s designated port(s).

Under the Offshore Fisheries Management Act (OFMA) 2012 and its Regulations, any landing of fish in Fiji is to be approved by the Director of Fisheries. Therefore, all vessel operators must seek / apply for permission to land their catch in Fiji if landing is needed.

As such, the landing of catch is monitored or supervised by authorized officers on a regular basis. Vessels to be monitored for their landing are selected from a few reasons including but not limited to the identification of vessels of interest (VOI) and discrepancies in catch declared during boarding and inspection and that applied to be landed.

**Objectives**

1] To monitor the onshore landing and in port transshipment process in accordance to issued landing and or transshipment permits.

2] To collect the port monitored vessel’s landing summaries from the processing facility and or the cold storage facility.

3] To cross validate the onshore landing and or in port transhipment process against the log-sheet submitted by the monitored vessels and the standardized landing summaries submitted by the processing companies and or cold storage facilities.

**Expected Outcomes**

1. The efficient monitoring of Vessels of Interest [VOI], both local and foreign, and their landing activities against the issued landing/processing and export permits.
2. The proper tracking of fish from the vessel(s) to the point of landing right up to the acquisition of the market destination.
3. Coordinated and proper collection, collation and quick analysis of recorded information in order to ensure that vessels are compliant with the cabinet decision.
4. The identification of and provision of accurate information to the Investigation Unit should a vessel be deemed to be non-compliant under the Offshore Fisheries Management Act 2012 and the Offshore Fisheries Management Regulations and other relevant regional and international obligations.
5. The identification of additional loop holes in the Port Monitoring system in order to ensure that the fish products’ traceability is not hindered and that the provisioning of adequate solutions are identified in order to stem these gaps and solve for them.

**Current Status**

Port Monitoring Activities 2018:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Month** | **No. of vessels port monitored** | **Breakdown by Flag** | **Total tonnage monitored (MT)** |
| January | 17 vessels | 7 Fiji, 8 China, 1 Chinese Taipei, 1 Tuvalu | 483.81 |
| March | 4 vessels | 1 Fiji, 2 China, 1 Chinese Taipei | 214.25 |
| May | 1 vessel | 1 Fiji | 13.49 |
| June | 3 vessels | 2 Fiji, 1 China | 187.43 |
| July | 12 vessels | 5 Fiji, 5 Fiji, 2 Vanuatu | 868.92 |
| August | 3 vessels | 3 China | 336.42 |
| September | 9 vessels | 3 Fiji, 2 China, 4 Chinese Taipei | 425.83 |
| October | 12 vessels | 9 Fiji, 3 China | 411.15 |
| November | 14 vessels | 9 Fiji, 4 China, 1 Chinese Taipei | 359.18 |
| December | 3 vessels | 2 China, 1 Chinese Taipei | 129.96 |
| **TOTAL** | **78 Vessels** | | **3,430.44** |

Port Monitoring Activities 2019:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Month** | **No. of vessels port monitored** | **Breakdown by Flag** | **Total tonnage monitored (MT)** |
| March | 8 vessels | 4 Fiji, 3 China, 1 Vanuatu | 263.43 |
| April | 11 vessels | 6 Fiji, 5 China | 233.46 |
| May | 31 vessels | 20 Fiji, 11 China | 927.62 |
| June | 16 vessels | 12 Fiji, 3 China, 1 Chinese Taipei | 424.21 |
| **TOTAL** | **66 Vessels** | | **1,848.71** |

**Note:**

1. A total of 144 vessels port monitored and with a total tonnage of 5,297.15 mt from 2018 – June 2019.
2. 25% of the fund utilized.
3. Monitoring works to be continued in the coming months and roll over to next year.

**Constraints**

Some difficulties faced were:

1. Acquiring of funds from Ministry of Economy [MoE] after request for roll over from 2018 - 2019 financial year.
2. We could not recruit ROP [Observers] due to non-availability as exploratory licenses increased in our waters and had a new requirement for 100% observer placement so most officers were engaged there hence the use of boarding and enforcement officers to carry out port monitoring.

**Future Plan**

The ministry has requested MoE for another roll over for 2019 - 2020 financial year with the remaining funds to continue the port monitoring exercise for 2019 and 2020.

1. **JTF Progress Report from nauru**

NFMRA is keen to build the capacity of NFMRA officers in-country to improve its ability in conducting at-sea boarding and inspection within its area of jurisdiction to contribute to the conservation and management measures of fisheries resources of the region.

Objectives:

* To conduct training for NFMRA officers on best practice of at-sea boarding and inspection procedures.
* To develop Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) for NFMRA on at-sea boarding and inspection.
* To advise NFMRA on gears and equipment necessary for NFMRA officers in conducting at-sea boarding and inspection.

**Status**

An extension was granted to conduct the work in 2016. Nauru expected the arrival in April 2017 of trailers for their multi-purpose boats, and thereafter they would be able to launch/retrieve the boats to and from the sea safely; then the projects at-sea boarding and inspection training would proceed. An extension of the project into 2017 has been granted by Japan. To date the project funds have not been utilized; Nauru has taken delivery of the trailers but has been hit by another setback due to the unseaworthiness of their boats. JTF recognising the importance of safety at sea has granted a further extension into 2018 to allow the boats to be overhauled and project conducted.

1. **JTF Progress Report from tonga**

In 2019, Japan Trust Fund (JTF) approved three projects for Tonga Ministry of Fisheries and they are i)*“Longline observer training”;* ii)*“Port sampling and data collection”*; and iii) *“Capacity building and strengthening of Tonga’s Fisheries Legal Section”*. These projects aimed for the fulfilment and implementation of Tonga’s obligation to WCPFC and other regional and international organizations. A summary of the status of the project, the expected outcomes and schedules are as follows:

1. **Longline Observer Training**

This project supports Tonga National Observer Program (TNOP) to conduct PIRFO Basic Longline Observer Training for new observer trainee and MSC observer training for the current observers. PIRFO Basic observer training has been completed with 7 new observers qualified to conduct observer duties onboard longline vessels. The training was conducted by SPC observer trainer for four (4) weeks before presented their certificates and become certified observers. After the training, the top three observers were selected to attend the full PIRFO observer training held in Vanuatu for another 4 weeks. This advance training will allow them to conduct observer duties onboard longline and purse seine vessels. The MSC observer training is yet to complete and it is scheduled to be conducted later in October.

The expected output of these observer trainings will be to support the Ministry’s policy for a 100% observer coverage onboard foreign longline vessels licenses to fish in Tonga EEZ and 20% coverage on domestic longliners. This program provides employment for young guys that have interest in fishing and allow them with experience in scientific perspectives by collecting scientific information. Some of the observers were crewing local longline vessels before joining the observer training. This is a benefit for the observer program as these new observers already gain experience in fishing and navigation from their previous fishing trips.

The MSC observer training is scheduled to be conducted in October. This is another working opportunity for the certified observers with the increase demand for MSC observers from the Cook Island and US Treaty purse seine vessels. There still be available funds from the project to complete this MSC observer training.

1. **Port Sampling and Data collection**

This project title is to support and maintain high level data collection and to improve management of tuna fisheries in Tonga, as well as providing awareness on conservation of tuna species. This project builds on JTF funded support since 2010 and the aim is to fund port sampling in Tonga for the year 2019. Part of the fund has been used in the first half of the year for port sampling fees but still enough fund to cover the other item proposed for the project.

This project is ongoing until the end of 2019. Data collection is currently implemented with port sampling and data entry and reports. The project supported port samplers with their duty to collect 100% coverage of port sampling data and logsheets from tuna longlines and recruit more staff to help with data collection when more vessels coming in to offload.

The two-daily paid labour for i) artisanal tuna data collection; and ii) port sampler and data entry will be recruited in September when their contract is approved by the Minister for Fisheries. The e-Reporting training will be conducted together with the introductory training of the two new port samplers. ER is basically for the longline skipper to use SPC’s Onboard System to submit their logbook electronically and unloaded online into TufMan2 database. TAILs application is also implemented, and the new artisanal tuna data officer will also be trained on using this application.

The number of vessels were decreased last year due to low catch rates, but this year more vessels coming in to the fishery and we expect more work to be done by the port sampler in order to collect reliable data from all vessels.

1. **Capacity building and strengthening of Tonga’s Fisheries Legal section**

A capacity building program intended to facilitate the experiential training of Tonga’s Fisheries Legal Section, especially their Legal Officer, to better enable them to support the implementation of WCPFC CMMs, work on FFA initiatives to regulate access to FFA members country waters and observer related activities.

The recruitment of the new legal assistant has been completed last month while the rest of the proposed items will be implemented later this year. Sufficient fund available for these activities to complete before the end of the project.

1. **Recommendations:**

Due to the differences in money exchanges from USD to Tongan Pa’anga (TOP), we expected an unspent fund from all these projects by the end of the year. Therefore, we hereby propose and seek kind approval from the Steering Committee:

1. To utilized remaining fund in related activities from the current proposal; and
2. To help with the data collection equipment and related materials for port sampling and observer program
3. **Acknowledgement**

On behalf of the Government of Tonga and it’s Ministry of Fisheries, I hereby extend our great appreciation with thanks to the Government of Japan in granting us with these financial support through Japan Trust Fund. We witness the benefit of these project on our current port sampling and observer program by providing employment to Tonga people and also to complete our obligation to WCPFC and other regional organization. Not only that but the capacity building and strengthening of Fisheries Legal section to enable the implementation of WCPFC CMMs and FFA initiatives. Malo ‘aupito!!!!!

1. **JTF Progress Report from tuvalu**

**Project Title**: Capacity building training for Tuvalu Fisheries and Maritime Police officers to conduct High Seas Boarding Inspections (HSBI)

***Objectives***

1. To enhance the capacity of fisheries and Police Maritime personnel to conduct High Seas Boarding Inspections in the High Seas in accordance with WCPFC Boarding and Inspection Procedures (CMM 2006-08).
2. Officers to fully understand the HSBI procedures and the application of the CMM 2006-08 in the WCPF Convention area.

* What has been done
* A 5 days in-country training workshop was carried out from 2-6 July 2018 for Tuvalu Fisheries and Police Maritime Officers on HSBI procedures.
* The amount remitted was US$15,000 (=AU$18,700.78)
* The amount utilized in the HSBI training is AU$2,252.17 (training materials & venue & refreshment).
* Balance to date = AU$16,668.61
* We did not utilize the proposed budget since the two trainers from the Ministry of Primary Industry in NZ were managed to fund themselves (travel and DSA) to come over to conduct this training (Mr Glen – Chief Compliance Officer & Ms Justine (Pacific Advisor MCS and Enforcement) – Both from Compliance Operation branch
* What expected outcomes?
* Training will facilitate Tuvalu Fisheries and Police Maritime officers to undertake HSBI as authorized high seas boarding inspectors.
* Trainees to understand CMMs and international instruments that govern boarding operations in the high seas.
* Provide professional training for Tuvalu Fisheries and Police Maritime officers in conducting HSBI
* Provide HSBI training for all potential MCS personnel that would be involved in surveillance patrol activities
* It is intended that the training will provide a platform for selected officers to conduct periodic in-house training to ensure HSBI procedures are adhered to
* Trainees to establish a level of confidence in operating outside of national jurisdiction to board and inspect fishing vessels
* Effective implementation of HSBI by Tuvalu’s Pacific Patrol Boat
* What’s need to be done (way forward)
* We are proposing to run similar training/workshop to make use of this funding, and to extend the capacity within the Tuvalu Fisheries Department, Maritime Police officers and other relevant stakeholders on HSBI.
* Challenges faced
* There were no challenges faced on the first training.