



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
TWENTY-FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

Nuku'alofa, Tonga
13 – 21 August 2025

JAPAN TRUST FUND STATUS REPORT 2025

WCPFC-SC21-2025/ RP-JTF-01
23 July 2025

Cook Islands, Fiji, Palau, Philippines, Samoa, South Pacific Group (SPG¹), Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Secretariat

Introduction

The majority of the WCPFC Members are developing states including Small Island Developing States (SIDS), whose capacities to implement conservation and management measures are limited and would benefit from strengthened capacity. The WCPFC Project on Capacity Building in Fisheries Statistics, Regulations and Enforcement for SIDS originated from a Japanese funding proposal to the WCPFC made in December 2005, also known as the Japan Trust Fund (JTF). The primary objective of this project is to support capacity building of the developing countries of the WCPFC members, especially SIDS. The initial phase of the project was for 5 years starting from 2006 to 2011 with a total available funding of approximately USD 2 million.

Given the success of and general support for the project in its first 5-year phase, the Fisheries Agency of Japan sought and successfully secured a budget of around USD 2 million in total, for the second 5-year phase. The objectives and terms of reference for the second phase were similar to the previous phase, with an emphasis on enforcement and compliance. In 2016 the Japanese government granted an extension of one year to the second phase, supporting projects in 2017, which was further extended to include another year, 2018.

In 2019, the Japanese Fisheries Agency approved a third phase for the JTF retaining the same objectives and terms of reference for another 5 years. This third phase program is the same as the previous phases in principle with an emphasis on a new fisheries management procedure including harvest strategy and a new monitoring technology-related project.

¹ Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu

In 2025, the total JTF for 2025 is USD 156,566. The 2025 JTF was slightly reduced compared to 2024 due to depreciation in the currency exchange rate of Japanese Yen which resulted in budget reduction in terms of US dollars. After the deduction of the 7.5% administrative fee of USD 11,742.45, the balance available for 2025 projects is around USD 144,823.55. A summary of 2025 approved projects and their status are found in **Annex 1** of this report.

All JTF-funded project summaries since 2012 are compiled in one document [Japan Trust Fund Summary of Projects 2012 to Date](#) posted on the WCPFC website (under Key Documents/Implementation of Article 30 of the Convention) with summary of carried over project in **Annex 2**. Brief reports of completed JTF projects in 2024 and early 2025 are in **Annex 3**.

In general, the new and carried over approved projects funded by the JTF are mainly for SIDS seeking assistance in building their capacities related to data collection, especially in these new emerging technologies such as electronic reporting and electronic monitoring (ER and EM) which will eventually assist in the harvest strategy work being developed by WCPFC.

Japan Trust Fund – Objectives and Expected Activities

The objectives and expected activities for the JTF are contained in the Consolidated Project Document , which provides guidelines for the Steering Committee to select project proposals. They may be conveniently summarized as follows:

“The basic objectives of this project are, within the purview of WCPFC, to assist SIDS Members, and other developing States Members as appropriate, in improving their capacities in:

- a. *Data collection and reporting of their fisheries and associated activities, in particular, those required by WCPFC, and*
- b. *Establishment of fisheries regulation and its effective enforcement, in particular, the conservation and management measures adopted by WCPFC*

In order to pursue these objectives, following activities may be implemented under the Project:

- a. *Data collection and reporting of their fisheries and associated activities, in particular, those required by WCPFC:*
 - *identify and examine the source of uncertainty in data collection and reporting;*
 - *develop and implement capacity-building programs to improve fisheries data collection and reporting;*
 - *assist if necessary WCPFC to facilitate appropriate opportunities (e.g., meetings, workshops) to consider improved data collection and reporting of their fisheries by developing States and their participation in the Commission.*
- b. *Establishment of fisheries regulation and its effective monitoring, control and enforcement, in particular, the requirements by WCPFC*
 - *review enforcement and monitoring mechanisms in developing states Members in terms of legal, institutional and technical aspects and identify opportunities for strengthening these areas;*
 - *develop and implement capacity-building programs to improve fisheries monitoring regulation and enforcement by developing states members;*
 - *assist if necessary WCPFC to hold appropriate opportunities to consider improved enforcement by developing States under their jurisdiction and through their participation in the Commission.”*

Annex 1. Status of Approved Projects for 2025 (Year 2, Phase 4 Program)²

#	Beneficiary Member(s)	Contacts	Project Title	Objectives	Budget (USD)
1	Philippines	Suzette Barcoma Email: suzettebarcoma@gmail.com	Introduction of Biodegradable Fish Aggregating Devices (BioFADs) Using Bamboo Raft and Abaca Ropes in the Philippines	The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of utilizing natural abaca rope and bamboo raft as biodegradable alternatives for drifting Fish Aggregating Devices (dFADs) in tuna fisheries.	50,000.00
<u>Status:</u> The funds for this project were transferred on 28 April 2025. Activities commenced in July 2025.					
2	Tonga	Dr. Sione Vailala Matoto CEO for Fisheries Email: ceo@tongafish.gov.to ; vailalam@yahoo.com Mr. Martin Finau, Head of Fisheries Science Division Email: martin.finau@tongafish.gov.to Ms. Lavinia Vaipuna, Head of Offshore Section Email: lavinia.vaipuna@tongafish.gov.to ; nia.vaipuna@gmail.com	Support and maintain high level data collection and to improve management of tuna fisheries in Tonga, as well as providing timely feedback through monitoring programs on conservation of tuna Species (<i>Port Sampling</i>)	1. To fund tuna data collection (port sampling) over one full calendar year (2025) in Tonga. 2. To fund artisanal tuna data collection over one full calendar year (2025) in Tonga. 3. To empower staff capacity to enable collection of data and enter it into the database. 4. To conduct E-Reporting training for all new tuna vessel masters, port samplers, and artisanal data officers. 5. That the excess amount from each month (when the estimated number of vessels	44,279.00

² Annex 1 will be updated pending approval of submitted proposals

				not reach the target which means less than 20 unloading duties on tuna vessels per month) will be available to improve management and provide awareness of data collection. 6. To enhance the capacity of fisheries personnel on data management and reporting by attending the annual Tuna Data Workshop at SPC Noumea.	
<u>Status:</u> The funds for this project were transferred on 8 May 2025. Port sampling activities are ongoing.					
3	Tonga	<p>Dr Sione Vailala Matoto, CEO for Fisheries Email: vailalam@yahoo.com</p> <p>Mele To'a 'Atuekaho, Deputy CEO, Compliance Division Email: meletoaatuekaho@gmail.com</p> <p>Kalo Manuopangai, Observer Coordinator Email: kmanuopangai@gmail.com</p>	Capacity building in, and strengthening of, Tonga national observer programme & to conduct Basic Observer Longline Training for Tonga Observer Programme 2025	<p>This project seeks to strengthen Tonga's national observer programme by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building capacity of senior observers, who are also certified debriefers and creating a career path for these observers by utilizing them whilst on-shore to screen, debrief and enter observer data into the regional observer database called TUFMAN 2. 2. Building capacity of Tonga's national observers by 	25,625.00

				encouraging and promoting quality observer data as well as creating a performance-based incentive in order to keep observers on the job. 3. Conduct 3 weeks (15 working days) Longline Observer Training for new observer recruitment.	
Status: The funds for this project were transferred on 28 April 2025. Activities under this project are ongoing.					
4	Fiji	Meli Raicebe Email: raicebe.meli@gmail.com	Enhancing Fiji's Fisheries Data Collection and Compliance with WCPFC Conservation and Management Measures	1. To Train and build the technical capacities of Observers and Enforcement officers to effectively monitor and report fishing activities. 2. To enhance collaboration between line agencies and the industry to address operational and regulatory challenges.	24,919.55 ³
Status: The funds for this project were transferred on 27 May 2025. Activities under this project are ongoing.					
	Sub-total			Sum of project budget request	144,823.55
	WCPFC	Aaron Nighswander aaron.nighswander@wcpfc.int	7.5% administrative fee	Overhead	11,742.45
	Grand Total			Total JTF for 2025	156,566.00

³ The total requested budget was USD 39,850.00; due to the shortfall of the JTF budget JTF will finance JTF = USD 24,919.55 and the remaining balance to the SRF= USD 14,930.45

Annex 2. Carried over projects from previous years

#	Beneficiary Member(s)	Contacts	Project Title	Purpose/Summary	Budget (USD)
1	Palau (2023)	<p>Ms. Persis Omelau, Acting Director Bureau of Fisheries Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Environment P.O. Box 117, Koror, Palau, 96940 Email: omelaupersis@gmail.com</p> <p>Keith Mesebeluu, Policy Specialist/Acting Chief Email: keithmesebeluu@gmail.com</p> <p>Ms Zilah D. Oiterong Licensing and Revenue Officer Email: dirremeang@gmail.com</p> <p>Mr. Everson Sengebau EM Officer Observer</p>	Development of Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring (ER/EM) Program for the Division of Oceanic Fisheries of the Bureau of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment	<p>1. To assess and develop a fisheries electronic reporting and electronic monitoring program for information gathering and sharing.</p> <p>2. To address known gaps in data collection in the longline fishery and enhance the capacity of fisheries personnel on proper methods of data collection through ER/EM.</p> <p>3. To work in line with the newly amended and adopted WCPFC CMM 2013-05 on Catch and Effort Reporting, CMM 2014-03 on Standards, Specifications and Procedures for the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels, FFA's Regional LL EM objectives, and Palau's Blue Prosperity Plan to improve the availability and Accessibility of quality-assured information for scientific and compliance purposes and contribute to improving economic viability of longline fisheries.</p>	45,500.00
<p>Status: Palau conducted two (2) workshops related to this project in September and December 2023. There were remaining funds for this project but Palau seeks to use the remaining balance to supplement the ongoing work of the development of the EM and ER operational procedures, and further supplement the new proposed ER/EM Program for the Division of Oceanic Fisheries.</p> <p><i>Clarifications and updates for this project will be provided by Palau at the 2025 Steering Committee this August.</i></p>					

2	Palau (2024)	<p>Ms. Persis Omelau, Acting Director Bureau of Fisheries Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Environment P.O. Box 117, Koror, Palau, 96940 Email: omelaupersis@gmail.com</p> <p>Keith Mesebeluu, Policy Specialist/Acting Chief Email: keithmesebeluu@gmail.com</p> <p>Mr. Everson Sengebau, EM Officer Observer Email: ebs6ya@gmail.com</p> <p>Ms. Zilah Oiterong, Fisheries Licensing and Revenue Officer Email: dirremeang@gmail.com</p>	Supplementing the continued Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring (ER/EM) Program for the Division of Oceanic Fisheries of the Bureau of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Palau's local fishing company will be compliant with national regulations, WCPFC CMM 2013-05 on Catch and Effort Reporting, CMM 2014-03 on Standards, Specifications and Procedures for WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels, and FFA's Regional LL EM objectives. 2. Identify types of Electronic Monitoring System that are suitable and cost-effective for Palau's local fishing industry. 3. Palau's local fishing industries have a fully functioning ER/EM system in place. 	53,500.00
<p>Status: The funds were transferred in April 2024. Palau informed that on mid-July 2024, Palau's Bureau of Fisheries obtained six tablets in preparation for its App installations and working internally and with companies setting in-country workshops to gain understanding and knowledge of its utilization and making progress for implementation. In December 2024, Palau informed that they are requesting for an extension of this project in 2025. <i>Further updates for this project will be provided by Palau at the 2025 Steering Committee this August.</i></p>					
3	Solomon Islands	<p>Mr. Derrick Tagosia Electronic Reporting and Monitoring Coordinator Email: DTagosia@fisheries.gov.sb Phone: +677 39143/30264</p>	Training of Solomon Islands Fisheries Compliance Officers in Honiara and Noro on the use of Fisheries Information Management System (FIMS) Compliance Module to create, record and manage non-compliance cases and incidences electronically and the training of the	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To train our Compliance Officers on the FIMS Compliance module to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Receive GEN 3 reports from the Observers. o Create new Incidences based on GEN 3 reports. o Create new Cases based on Incidences created from GEN 3 reports from Observers. o Update cases, upload documents and evidence to the Cases 	34,965.00

			Industries Officers and the Fishing Vessels Captains on the use of iFIMs new eForms (Transshipment and Unloading) to record, send and manage catch data electronically.	management module in FIMS. o Change cases status based on the progresses, depending on the progress of the case, either, start investigation, start interviewing, court hearing, or fined and settled and complete. 2. To train the Fishing Companies on how to use the FIMS Transshipment and the Unloading modules to record, report and manage catch data as well as viewing status of cases in FIMS.	
<p><u>Status:</u></p> <p>The funds were received by Solomon Islands in late October 2023. Initial training for this project took place in Noro in November 2023. However, due to the operational commitments of the Honiara-based MCS Officers during 2024, their training was deferred. The Solomon Islands has proposed to proceed with the Honiara-based training, accompanied by an additional round of EM onsite technical support, in July and August 2025. <i>Further updates for this project will be provided by Solomon Islands at the 2025 Steering Committee this August.</i></p>					
4	Solomon Islands	Mr. Derrick Tagosia Electronic Reporting and Monitoring Coordinator Email: DTagosia@fisheries.gov.sb Phone: +677 39143/30264	Training of the Longline Fishing Companies Technical people on the basic Electronic Monitoring (EM) Systems troubleshooting processes and support to the Ministry's technical officers to travel down to Noro port to fix failed EM systems.	1. To train the Fishing companies technical officers on how to; o Inspect and check for hardware and software faults and errors. o Remove and replace full hard drives in port when vessels arrive back in port. o Shuts down and start EM systems to try and hard reset EM systems. o Reset systems by pressing the reset button.	24,675.00

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Check to see if dates and positional data are updated. o Report faults and errors to the Ministry and plan for EM team to travel down to Noro to fix any serious faults and errors. 2. To travel down to Noro once every 2 months (6 times to Noro) this year 2023 to fix hardware and software faults; the faults to be fix when traveling to Noro include but not limited to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Fix fault hardware o Remove and replace hardware spare parts including; cameras, antennas, cables, screen/server and UPS o Install software upgrades o Install updates 	
<p><u>Status:</u></p> <p>The Solomon Islands had conducted an onsite technical support training for their Industries in Noro last November 2023. They had a technical support trip on 20th January 2024. The remaining balance is designated to fund additional onsite technical-support missions in August and September 2025. SI extends its sincere gratitude to the Japan Trust Fund for their continued support, which has been invaluable in advancing our EM Policy to this point. <i>Further updates for this project will be provided by Solomon Islands at the 2025 Steering Committee this August.</i></p>					
5	Solomon Islands	Mr. Derrick Tagosia Electronic Reporting and Monitoring Coordinator Email: DTagosia@fisheries.gov.sb Phone: +677 39143/30264	Support to Solomon Islands National Electronic Monitoring (EM) Policy Consultations, Drafting and Launching	To provide financial support for Solomon Islands National Longline EM Policy internal and external consultations with the industries and stakeholders.	48,247.50

Status:

Solomon Islands (SI) recognizes that monitoring of fishing activities and operations of fishing vessels remains a big challenge, especially for longline fishing vessels, thus, the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) viewed electronic monitoring (EM) as the solution to these challenges of monitoring longline fishing vessels activities and operations. As EM is an emerging management tool in tuna fisheries monitoring utilizing new available technologies in gathering data that will help in the verification and validation of fisheries' logbook information, leading to enhanced data, which will support improved fisheries management and help verify and monitor implementation of CMMs. In WCPFC, EM data could be a source of independent and impartial data which will supplement the ROP and other data sources, that will eventually support the harvest strategy work that is currently being developed. In this regard, the support provided to Solomon Islands for this project is essential to guide Solomon Islands EM program implementations.

Solomon Islands has completed the internal consultations within the Ministry and the external consultations with the companies and already has a draft SI EM Policy for review and submit to the management for their input before the validation workshop, printing, and dissemination.

Solomon Islands was not able to finalize and launch their draft EM policy. The Solomon Islands will have the final consultation with their Industries and the management and they should have their final draft for the executive management to approve before they go for printing and launching. The remaining balance of USD 13,247.50 is allocated to support the final consultations, printing, and launch activities scheduled for June / July 2025. SI extends its sincere gratitude to the Japan Trust Fund for their ongoing support, which has been instrumental in the development of our EM Policy to date.

Further updates for this project will be provided by Solomon Islands at the 2025 Steering Committee this August.

6	Samoa	Moli Amosa Iakopo Samoa Principal Fisheries Officer- Offshore and Compliance Units Email: moli.iakopo@maf.gov.ws Roseti Imo Samoa Fisheries ACEO-MAF Email: roseti.imo@maf.gov.ws	Enhancing Capacity and Strengthening Samoa National Observer Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Expand the observer program to include certified observers from the public.2. To Identify and train an individual for the role of a debriefer and Develop and implement standardized debriefing procedures.3. Create SOPs for various aspects of observer tasks, ensuring consistency and compliance.4. Formulate a comprehensive emergency action plan to guide observers in crisis situations.5. Develop a Fisheries Observer Policy tailored to Samoa's context and in line with ROP requirements.	33,000.00
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Status: Samoa reported delays in the implementation of their project due to internal issues and processes, and requested the extension of the project to 2025. They are not currently a member of the Regional Observer Program (ROP). The Secretariat has requested Samoa's bank details, but Samoa is withholding them until their internal issues are resolved, which is expected to happen within the first quarter of 2025 (January to March). The issue has been escalated to the CEO, and the Policy and Finance teams are now involved.

An in-country workshop with regional partners is scheduled for March to proceed with the project activities. Samoa has requested to extend the project until the end of 2025 to fully utilize the approved budget. There is no impact on the overall project plan, and the primary objective remains to join the Regional Observer Program and have an Observer Policy in place.

Further updates for this project will be provided by Solomon Islands at the 2025 Steering Committee this August.

7	Cook Islands	Mr Andrew Jones Senior Fisheries Officer A.Jones@mmr.gov.ck	Development of National Competent Authority [HACCP strategy] for Cook Islands Offshore Fisheries	This project seeks to support a comprehensive review of Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) Competent Authority programs to ensure that current systems respond to the needs of MMR's fisheries management framework.	74,500.00
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Status:

Cook Islands had challenges securing expertise in a timely manner to complete the Competent Authority (CA) policy elements of this work. Cook Islands had to engage in a procurement process and an expert from New Zealand (NZ) that will be visiting the MMR office in Rarotonga to complete this work. Cook Islands' new timeline for this project is to be completed by December 2024, due to travel schedules for the training elements. Cook Islands was able to supplement the budget to have more staff trained on this CA work. FFA has also offered its assistance for Cook Islands related to this project. Limited staffing capacity and competing priorities caused delays in progressing the work. The majority of this work is still ongoing. Please refer to the [JTF Annual Report 2024](#) for more details.

Project updates and clarifications will be provided by Cook Islands at the 2025 Steering Committee this August.

8	Cook Islands	Ms Pamela Maru Secretary MMR P.Maru@mmr.gov.ck	Improving participation and engagement in international fisheries forums	The Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) intends to implement a series of training sessions to engage and prepare staff to participate in regional fisheries meetings. This work supports professional development, including working with other	62,886.10
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				Ministries' training programs such as diplomatic protocols and negotiations, to ensure staff are adequately trained before they venture into international meetings to represent the Cook Islands.	
<p><u>Status:</u></p> <p>In December 2022, Cook Islands informed that the project activities have been completed such as course material development (9 modules, study guide plus quiz/test materials), in-country delivery of courses to two cohorts (with 1 expert only) during a single visit to Rarotonga. Some of the activities have been undertaken at a reduced capacity given travel, expert availability, and other factors during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this case, the total received budget of NZD 92,406 has some savings of about NZD 22,515. The Cook Islands requested that the remaining funds be used to update the training materials and digitize the said materials (e.g. videos) to provide for self-learning. The Cook Islands prepared a proposal related to this request which was approved by Japan.</p> <p>As noted above, the Cook Islands had requested approval to utilize the remaining funds from the original project to further enhance the training materials and make the modules accessible online for new and other participants from the Cook Islands. It was also noted that the retirement of the project manager overseeing this work had caused a gap in implementation. The Cook Islands subsequently re-engaged the consultant responsible for digitizing the training materials, including videos, in line with the approved use of the remaining funds. The work was originally planned for completion by December 2024, given the number of modules involved. It is understood that no payments have yet been made, pending receipt of an invoice from the consultant. Further information on the project as initially reported can be found in the JTF Annual Report 2024.</p> <p><i>Project updates and clarifications will be provided by Cook Islands at the 2025 Steering Committee this August.</i></p>					

Annex 3. Brief Reports of Completed JTF Project/s in 2024 and 2025

Project #1 (2024): Development of a Register of Fishing Rights and a Catch Estimation and Visualisation Tool to enable zone-based management of South Pacific albacore by the South Pacific Group

A. Project Objectives

1. Develop the system specifications through consultation with SPG, FFA, and SPC.
2. Develop the Register of Fishing Rights and the Catch Estimation and Visualisation Tool in consultation with SPG, FFA, and SPC.
3. Test, demonstrate the system, and train parties on use of the system.

B. Results and Discussions

This project has two components. The first component is the Register of Fishing Rights (RFR) and the second is the Catch Estimation and Visualization Tool (CEVT).

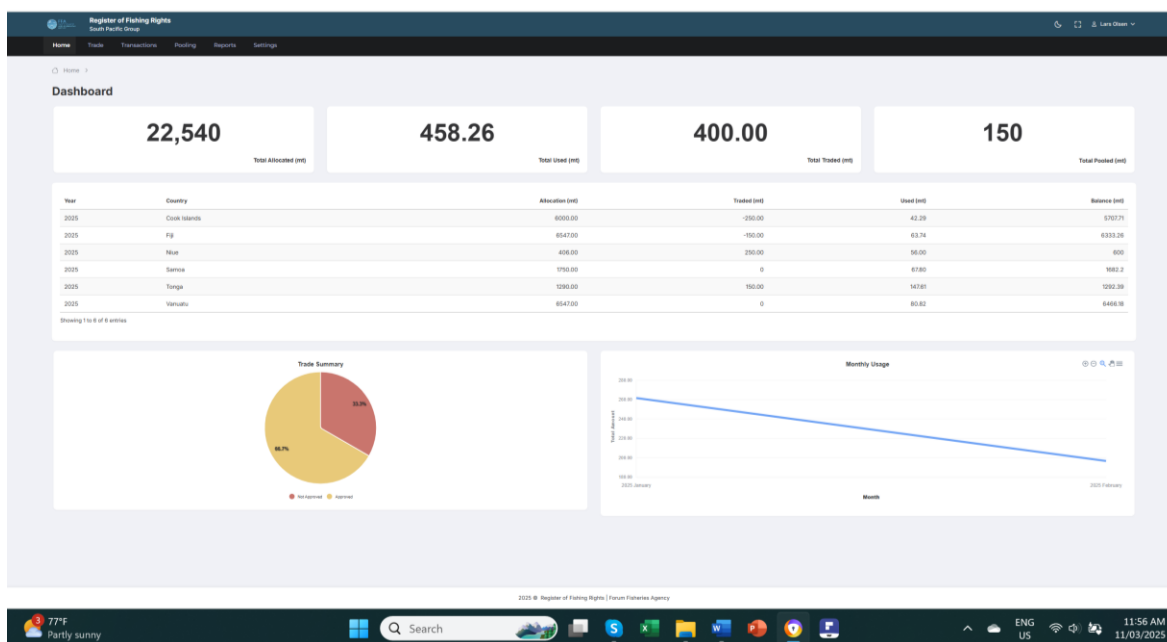
The CEVT has so far been developed internally by SPC and as such, has not incurred any direct dollar costs. There may come a time for this, but currently it looks like SPC is committed to resourcing this CEVT work internally. As such, SPG will not have spent all the grant money allocated from JTF.

The specifications for the RFR were developed by SPG in the lead up to a Request for Proposal being advertised by FFA on 22 October 2024. The specifications for the RFR are based on the needs described in the SPG DRAFT Zone-Based Management Agreement (ZBMA). The ZBMA is not yet ratified by the SPG countries. This will be done when South Pacific Albacore (SPA) allocations and harvest strategy are complete, yielding a TAC for SPA.

Ten companies tendered for this work and the FFA RFR Tender Panel met on 19 December 2024 to evaluate, score and chose the winning bid. The FFA tender evaluation process was followed for this. The work was awarded to TraSeable Solutions Pte Ltd, based in Suva, Fiji on 9 January 2025 by FFA. A project inception meeting was held virtually on 13 January 2025 to start the development process. TraSeable Solutions then developed a design prototype for initial feedback, which they presented to the SPG Technical Adviser (TA) and FFA on 14 February 2025. Feedback was provided, which allowed TraSeable Solutions to commence developing the RFR. Another meeting was held with TraSeable Solutions, FFA, and SPC on 26 February to work out how the CEVT will feed data into the RFR. Various API and transfer solutions were discussed.

The final draft version of the RFR was presented to the SPG virtually by TraSeable Solutions at the SPG meeting held on 3 March 2025. Final comments and questions were discussed. Next steps for this process are for nominated SPG members to receive “sign-ins” for the RFR so they can experiment with the system nationally. This is due to occur during the week of 10 March 2025.

If no additional comments or questions are received, the RFR will be published in its final version and will be hosted on a FFA server. Below is a screen shot of the main dashboard of the RFR. Note that the data contained in the screen shot is “dummy data” and not actual numbers or transactions.



The project has (nearly) achieved the expected outcome for the RFR. The RFR will be an easy-to-use and functional system that will enable the SPG ZBMA to be implemented. The RFR will serve as the agreed ledger for allocations and usage during the fishing year.

There were unfortunately a few delays in getting the RFR developed, some due to the time needed for SPG to finalise the specifications and some due to time in the FFA process. In the future, some of these delays could be reduced with earlier engagement from the group and the FFA. The CEVT is not yet completed, but so far hasn't incurred any financial costs. Work with SPC continues, and it is hoped that the CEVT will be complete and operational by mid-2025. This will then be able to be linked to the RFR. Once linked, the two systems can be trailed by the SPG in the lead up to when the implement their ZBMA.

C. Budget

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	50,000.00
Funds Utilized	21,300.00
In-Kind Contribution (if any)	Unspecified from SPC
Other Funding Source/s (if any)	

D. Fund Balance

The fund balance of USD 28,700 will be transferred/returned to JTF.

E. Comments/Conclusions/Feedback/Suggestions/Recommendations

The SPG is very thankful for the grant money received from the Japan Trust Fund. We think the JTF is a great initiative and are pleased to see it contribute to zone-based management of South Pacific Albacore for the SPG countries. If further funding for the development of either the RFR or the CEVT is required in the future, it is hoped that we might be able to come back to the JTF to apply for funding for this work.

Project #2 (2024): Support and maintain high level data collection and to improve management of tuna fisheries in Tonga, as well as providing timely feedback through monitoring programs on conservation of tuna Species (*Port Sampling*)

A. Project Objectives

1. To fund tuna data collection (port sampling) over one full calendar year (2024) in Tonga
2. To fund artisanal tuna data collection over one full calendar year (2024) in Tonga.
3. To empower staff capacity to enable collection of data and enter into database.
4. To conduct E-Reporting training of all new tuna vessel masters, port samplers and artisanal data officers.
5. That the excess amount from each month (when estimated number of vessels not reach target which means less than 20 unloading duties on tuna vessels per month) will be available to improve management and provide awareness of data collection.
6. To enhance the capacity of fisheries personnel on data management and reporting by attending the annual Tuna Data Workshop at SPC Noumea.

B. Results and Discussions

Key Achievements:

Port Sampling

- Fishing Fleet Overview: In 2024, 5 domestic tuna vessels and 7 foreign fishing vessels operated in Tonga's waters.
- Logsheet Coverage: Maintained a 100% logsheet coverage for the entire year, ensuring complete data capture for tuna fishing activities.
- Port Sampling Sessions: A total of 146 trips were made, and port sampling sessions were successfully conducted.

Tuna Artisanal data collection

- Island Groups Coverage: The project facilitated the expansion of tuna artisanal data collection to cover all island groups of Tonga, which is critical for understanding regional fishing activities.
- Logsheets Collected: A total of 620 logsheets were submitted as part of the Tuna Artisanal Data Collection Programme across various island groups:

Island Groups	No. of Submissions
Eua	459
Ha'apai	61
Niua Toputapu	20
Niuaatoputapu	14
Vava'u	66
Grand Total	620

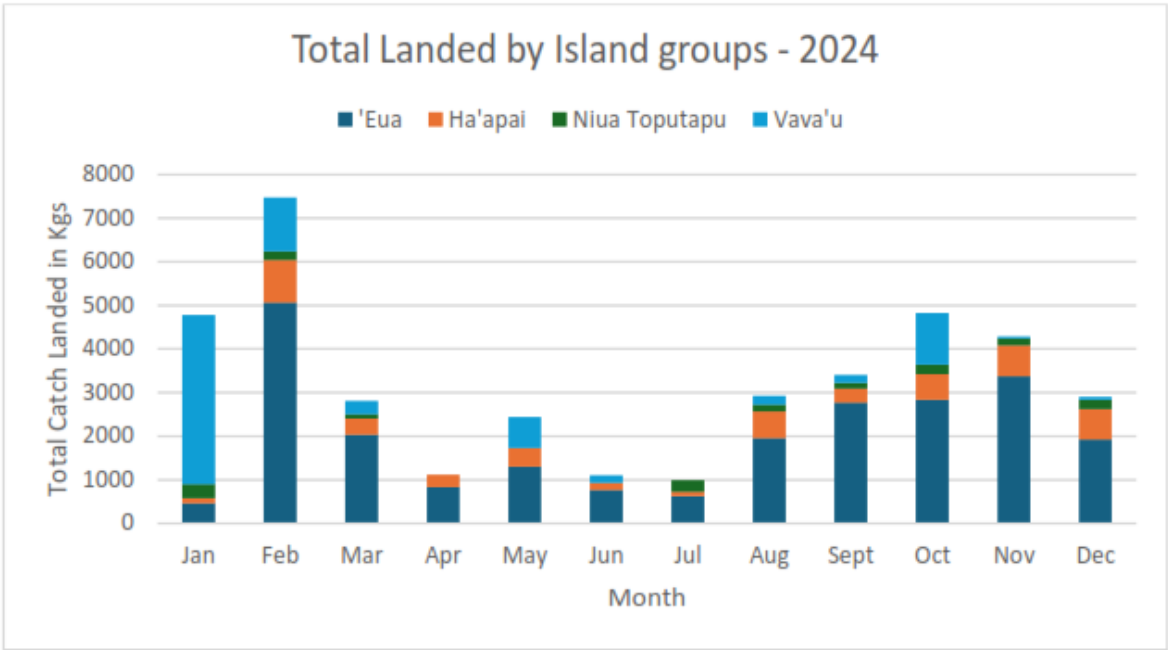
Staff Capacity Building

- Data Monitors: Five daily-paid data monitors were supported, to strengthen tuna data collection efforts across Tonga. These monitors were strategically deployed across Tonga's island groups, ensuring localized data collection and maximizing coverage.
- Data Collection Responsibilities: Data monitors collected key data on tuna catch, fishing effort, and other relevant parameters, strengthening the grassroots-level data collection efforts.

Electronic Reporting Capacity Building Training

- A refresher TAILS training session was held in Ha’apai in June 2024.
- An in-house ER training was conducted, focusing on Onshore Applications data entry and submission for CKMR (Close Kin Mark Recapture) data collection.
- A second refresher TAILS training took place in Vava’u in December 2024.

Data from the project-funded data monitors contributed significantly to the overall tuna catch data, enhancing the understanding of artisanal fisheries in Tonga.



Electronic Reporting

The project has made substantial progress in maintaining electronic reporting throughout 2024, which has streamlined data collection processes and improved reporting accuracy. The total number of logsheets submitted by different system sources is as follows:

E-Reporting Apps	System Source	
	ER	Manual
Onboard	118	25

Onshore	204	43
TAILS	613	7
Olo	28	23
Total	963	98

Eighteenth Tuna Data workshop:

The project funded the participation of one additional representative from Tonga at the 18th Tuna Data Workshop held in Noumea in 2024, contributing to the country's capacity-building efforts and knowledge exchange.

Challenges

Despite significant progress, the project encountered a few challenges:

- **Staff Turnover:** Staff turnover remains a challenge, requiring constant training and onboarding of new personnel, including port samplers, data monitors, and vessel captains.
- **Tablet Compatibility:** Some tablets used for electronic reporting became outdated and are no longer compatible with the latest application versions, hindering reporting efficiency.
- **New Vessels:** The influx of new vessels in Tonga's waters necessitates additional training and system integration to ensure continuous and accurate reporting.

Way forward

To maintain and build upon the successes of 2024, the following steps are recommended:

- **Continued Investment in Training:** Ongoing investment in staff training and capacity building is crucial, especially for electronic reporting and data collection methodologies in order to maintain the high level data collection in Tonga.
- **Strengthening Data-Driven Decision Making:** Greater emphasis will be placed on using electronic reporting data to guide evidence-based decision-making for sustainable fisheries management.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Continued engagement with local fishers, vessel operators, and other stakeholders will be essential for ensuring the success of data collection activities and maintaining awareness of the project.

C. Budget

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	46,508.00
Funds Utilized	Port Sampling Fees: USD10,110.00 Daily data Monitors wages, Capacity building Training: Electronic Training: USD32,125.00 Participation in the 18 th Tuna Data workshop: USD4,273.00 Total utilized: USD46,508.00
In-Kind Contribution (<i>if any</i>)	Vehicle Tablets for e- Reporting, Trainers

	Facility
Other Funding Source/s (if any)	

D. Fund Balance

The funds were fully utilized

E. Comments/Conclusions/Feedback/Suggestions/Recommendations

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Japanese Trust Fund (JTF) for their unwavering support throughout 2024. Their funding has been pivotal in ensuring the continuation and expansion of tuna data collection activities in Tonga. The project's success highlights the importance of sustained collaboration, and we look forward to further strengthening this partnership in the coming years.

We recommend continued focus on training, upgrading electronic tools, and engaging stakeholders to further enhance sustainable fisheries management. Furthermore, addressing challenges related to staff turnover and technological updates will ensure the project remains effective and efficient.

TAILS data collection in 'Eua



TAILS data Collection in Niua Toputapu

