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UPDATE ON THE WPEA PROJECT

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Prepared by Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam and the Secretariat

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the West Pacific East Asia project for the information and noting of the Commission.

I. BACKGROUND

Indonesia and Philippines Data Collection Project (IPDCP)

2. In early 2000, while annual catches of oceanic tuna species in the Philippines and the Pacific Ocean waters of Indonesia were estimated in a range of 20-30% of the total catch of the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO), little or no information was available for the WCPO tuna stock assessment. The lack of accurate catch statistics, effort data, and species composition and size composition data for the Philippines and Indonesia has been highlighted at meetings of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish for many years and was responsible for much of the uncertainty in the MULTIFAN-CL¹ stock assessments for bigeye and yellowfin tuna.

3. After years of effort, strong support has also been expressed by agencies of Indonesia and Philippines. Since then, the data collection project started to take a concrete form through several meetings, working with IOTC, CSIRO, ACIAR, and Japan-OFCF. Throughout the Preparatory Conference period, the discussion evolved and fund raising was based on voluntary contributions from the Preparatory Conference participating countries. The activities of the proposed project include, for each country,

- a) a review of the tuna fisheries and the current monitoring systems;
- b) the compilation of historical catch and effort data;
- c) a workshop to formulate recommendations for the improvement of the monitoring system and to plan the sampling programmes;
- d) the establishment of a port sampling programme;
- e) the establishment of an observer programme;

¹ MULTIFAN-CL is a computer program that implements a statistical, length-based, age-structured model for use in fisheries stock assessment.

- f) the analysis of data collected and compiled during the project; and
- g) a workshop to review the achievements of the project and to plan for future monitoring.

4. The budget for the activities at that time was about USD 184,000 for the Philippines and USD 229,000 for Indonesia, for a total cost of USD 413,000. This project was called IPDCP.

West Pacific East Asia Oceanic Fisheries Management Project (WPEA-OFM)

5. Funding support was the greatest issue for the continuity of the IPDCP project. The Secretariat advised the third IPDCP Steering Committee that the Global Environment Facility (GEF) had expressed interest in funding a project in Indonesia, Philippines and Viet Nam. The objectives of the project were (i) to establish or improve the collection of tuna fishery data, and (ii) to promote good governance with regard to the management of tuna fisheries. The Steering Committee recommended that the WCPFC Executive Director continue to liaise with GEF, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam to develop a data collection and governance project for those countries. The Steering Committee recommended that, noting that GEF funding would not be available for another 18–24 months, CCMs continued to be invited to contribute to implement port sampling in Indonesia and Philippines, and that the Commission consider funding data collection in this area through its core budget.

6. Project Implementation Form, National Project Preparation Reports and Project Document were coordinated and prepared by the Secretariat, working with each country's focal point. The Secretariat was advised that its medium size project was accepted by the GEF in May 2009.

Improvements

7. Since the commencement of the IPDCP, starting in Philippines in 2005 and in Indonesia in 2007, there have been improvements in 2011 assessments of the WCPO tuna stocks by reducing uncertainty of input data and information. Especially, the WPEA-OFM project has greatly enhanced the quality of Indonesian and Philippine fishery data that are applied to regional tuna stock assessments conducted by the Oceanic Fisheries Programme of the Pacific Community (SPC-OFP) for the WCPFC. During the project period, the following improvements have been noted:

- More accurate estimates of total annual tuna catch by species
- More accurate estimates of species-specific catches by major fishing gear types
- The first size composition data from Indonesian tuna fisheries in more than two decades
- The establishment of operational-level data collection programmes (logsheets) for the industrial tuna fisheries
- The initiation of an observer programme in Philippines

These enhanced data were used for the first time in the skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye stock assessments conducted in 2011.

8. Throughout the WPEA-OFM project period, similar progress in data collection occurred in Viet Nam, and their data were also incorporated into regional stock assessments. Tuna catch data were originally collected in three provinces in Viet Nam, which was expanded to additional six provinces in 2013.

9. The WPEA-OFM was successfully completed in March 2013 and an independent evaluation report is available at:

<http://www.wcpfc.int/system/files/SC9-GN-IP-03-%5BWPEA-OFM-Independent-Evaluation-Report%5D.pdf>

Sustainable Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the West Pacific and East Asian Seas (WPEA-SM)

10. UNDP and WCPFC Secretariat prepared a new full size project along with the following process:

Project Framework Document (PFD)

- 1) Project title: Reducing Pollution and Rebuilding Degraded Marine Resources in the East Asian Seas through Implementation of Intergovernmental Agreements and Catalyzed Investments
- 2) The UNDP started preparing a parent program PFD from mid-2011, which was submitted to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on 29 March 2012, and a revision submitted on 12 April 2012. The PFD was endorsed by the GEF Secretariat in June 2012.
- 3) The list of projects under the PFD include:
 - a) YS LME Project: Implementation of the Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem Strategic Action Program for Adaptive Management (USD 7,562,430)
 - b) WPEA: Sustainable Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the West Pacific and East Asian Seas (USD 2,293,578)
 - c) PEMSEA²: Scaling up the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (USD 10,143,992)
- 4) Participating countries: Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Philippines, Thailand, Timor Leste, Vietnam

Project Identification Form (PIF) for the WPEA Project

- 1) Project title: Sustainable Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the West Pacific and East Asian Seas (WPEA-SM)
- 2) UNDP and WCPFC started developing a new WPEA project PIF since from 2012 and the final PIF was submitted to GEF on 5 April 2013. The PIF was approved by the GEF Council on 1 May 2013.
- 3) Total project cost is USD 2,233,578, a 3-year full size project, with the three participating countries (Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam).
- 4) PIF includes i) Indicative Project Framework, ii) Indicative co-financing, iii) Project Preparation Grant, iv) Project Justification, and v) Approval/Endorsement by GEF Focal Points of each country.

WPEA-SM Project Document

- 1) Drs Tony Lewis and Anna Tengberg developed the Project Document in consultation with UNDP, WCPFC Secretariat and the three participating countries from mid-2013.
- 2) After several reviews and revisions, the Project Document was endorsed by the GEF Secretariat on 12 May 2014, the final version was submitted to the GEF Council on 17 September 2014, and received their approval on 30 September 2014.

Commencement of WPEA-SM Project

- 1) Project Appraisal Committee Meeting
 - The *Project Appraisal Committee*, met in Manila on 28 May 2014, agreed that all three project partner countries (Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam) accepted WCPFC as the Project Implementing Partner. They also agreed that the Science Manager of the Commission should continue managing the WPEA-SM Project.

² PEMSEA: Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia, Manila, Philippines (<http://www.pemsea.org>),

- 2) A Project Cooperation Agreement between UNDP and WCPFC was made on 14 October 2014, and the WPEA-SM officially commenced on 28 October 2014.
- 3) The Project Inception Workshop was held in Da Nang, Viet Nam, 4-5 November 2014, and the Inception Workshop Report was adopted and submitted to the UNDP.

11. The WPEA-SM project was reviewed by the UNDP in early 2017 and the Midterm Review Report provided ten recommendations to improve project effectiveness and enhancing the likelihood that project results will be sustained after GEF funding ceases. The Report is available at <https://www.wcpfc.int/wpea> and key recommendations are summarized below:

12. Progress towards results has been affected by the delayed start of project activities in Indonesia and Vietnam. The project was endorsed by the GEF CEO on 12 May 2014 and national governments approved the project document on 28 October, the official start date of the project, but it took nearly another year for registration of the project and domestic processes in Indonesia and Vietnam, including opening of a new WPEA bank account.

13. As a follow-up project, the allocated 3-year implementation timeframe was seen at first as a reasonable amount of time considering implementation arrangements were in place from the first phase 3-year WPEA Oceanic Fisheries Management Project and a certain degree of momentum had been achieved. The second phase, however, contains aspects that were not part of the first phase, including climate change analysis and planning, pilot implementation of ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM), facilitation of market-based approaches to sustainable fisheries, and development of harvest strategy elements. This unanticipated risk, and the level of preparedness for absorption of these risks was generally low, rendering achievement of project outcomes over the 3-year timeframe a great challenge.

14. Based on the findings and recommendations of the Mid-term Review of the project conducted in March 2017, it is unlikely that several of the envisaged results will be achieved by the planned closure date of 28 October 2017. Given this recommendation, it was decided during the 4th Project Board Meeting, and approved by the Project Board that an extension of the project period be requested to the GEF-UNDP. Following the request, the GEF-UNDP approved the extension until 27 April 2019’

II. SUMMARY OF KEY WPEA-SM ACTIVITIES IN 2018

15. The WPEA-SM Project has three components and several expected outcomes under each component are shown below.

Component 1	Regional governance for building regional and national adaptive capacity of IDN, PHL and VNM in the management of HMFS
Expected Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved regional mechanisms for monitoring and assessment of HMFS 2. Enhanced capacity of technical staff, policy and decision makers to integrate climate change impacts on HMS into management regimes
Component 2	Implementation of policy, institutional and fishery management reform
Expected Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhanced compliance of existing legal instruments at national, regional and international levels 2. Adoption of market-based approaches to sustainable harvest of tunas 3. Reduced uncertainty in stock assessment and improved understanding of associated ecosystems and their biodiversity 4. Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) guiding sustainable harvest of the oceanic tuna stock and reduced by-catch
Component 3	Knowledge sharing on highly migratory fish stocks
Expected Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regional knowledge platform established on Pacific Ocean Warm Pool LME and EAS LME’s shared tuna stocks and associated ecosystems

16. The project specified targets to be achieved during the project period which are listed in the *Project Results Framework* in the Project Document. To reach the targets under each component, key activities identified are as follows:

Component 1

- a) Capacity building of the participating countries in science
- b) Sub-regional collaboration and governance in tuna fisheries, including establishment of MCS programmes
- c) Estimation of annual tuna catches by species and by gear
- d) Development of general guidelines on adaptive management and monitoring of highly migratory stocks to address the impacts of climate change on tuna fisheries
- e) Reflection of climate change guidelines into national tuna management plan

Component 2

- a) Review of national fisheries legislation in line with WCPFC requirements
- b) Development of reference points and harvest control rules at national level
- c) Tuna supply chain analysis
- d) Establishment of an appropriate certification system
- e) Tuna catch data collection at landing sites and data review
- f) Training of observers and implementation of observer programme to selected fisheries
- g) Trial application of ecosystem approach to fisheries management to tuna fisheries

Component 3

- a) Knowledge sharing by participating in the biennial GEF-IW Learn Conference and PEMSEA East Asian Seas Congress
- b) Construction of a WPEA project portal
- c) Establishment of a WPEA monitoring and evaluation reporting system

17. Along with the 2018 annual work plans developed with the three countries, several activities have been implemented. Because of similarities in the project activities, the activity outputs from one country could be shared by the other two. Most of the activities were composed of i) research consultancies and ii) subsequent workshops to review the consultancy outputs. A three-country sub-regional workshop is also convened once a year to promote face-to-face information sharing and cost-effective acquirement of international expertise on specific topics through the invited international experts. During the last three years, the workshops covered issues related to i) tuna stock assessments at national, sub-regional and regional level, with Dr John Hampton from SPC-OFP in 2015; ii) introduction to harvest strategy framework with Dr Osamu Sakai (Japan) and the impacts of climate change on tuna fisheries with Dr Sylvie Giraud (France) in 2016; and iii) application of an EAFM to tuna fisheries, with Dr Rick Fletcher from Australia in 2017. In 2018, the sub-regional workshop covered risk assessments and management of bycatch species through case studies in Australia, where Dr David Kirby (Australia) assisted the process.

18. The process of how the Secretariat implemented the WPEA activities in collaboration with the designated national project coordinators of the participating countries is listed below. In general, consultation meetings convened throughout the year to review the status and progress of each project activity in the country, develop annual work plan and budget for next year based on the progress of individual project activities, and review and adjust the process of the planned activities in the following year. Specific process includes:

- a) Submission of an individual activity proposal by the national project coordinators; review and endorsement of the proposal by the project manager; and wire-transfer of the budget to each country's official WPEA bank account by the Secretariat;
- b) National project coordinators monitor local consultancies and arrange/prepare national workshops;
- c) WCPFC Secretariat leads workshops to review the consultancy outputs and produce workshop

- reports;
- d) Secretariat prepares Project Board meetings; and
 - e) Secretariat reports the progress, monitoring and evaluation of the WPEA-SM project to UNDP, including all financial reporting requirements.

19. Several consultancies on various topics have been contracted and subsequent review workshops have been convened in 2018, focusing on developing adaptive guidelines against the impacts of climate change on tuna fisheries, tuna supply chain analysis, eco-labelling and certification scheme, reference points and harvest control rules, application of EAFM to tuna fisheries, review of fisheries legislation in line with WCPFC requirements, updating national tuna fishery profile, review and amendment of national tuna management plan, etc. Detailed events and meeting activities are listed below.

- 1) 2018.01-06 (Finance Audit of WPEA-SM) – An independent UNDP audit was conducted for the WPEA-SM Project, covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2017. This report summarizes the scope, risk ratings, related findings, recommendations and implementation plan that were developed throughout the review procedures performed in the WCPFC office and Responsible Parties' country offices in Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam. The audit report is available at <https://www.wcpfc.int/wpea>.
- 2) 2018.01.22-26 (Vietnam) – Vietnam convened a Review Workshop on WPEA project consultancy reports. The workshop was attended by 30 participants from related agencies. The workshop reviewed the following consultancy reports:
 - Review of Vietnam's fishery legislation in line with WCPFC requirements;
 - Revised national tuna management plan of Vietnam;
 - Harvest strategy framework for tuna fisheries;
 - Guidelines for the development of EAFM plan;
 - Guidelines for the adoptive management to the impacts of climate change on tuna fisheries;
 - Guidelines for regional capacity building, training on climate change adaption for national technical fishery staff, policy and decision makers in Vietnam;
 - Sustainable fishing manual for fishermen; and
 - Vietnam tuna fisheries profile.
- 3) 2018.03.12-16 (Indonesia) – Indonesia convened a Review Workshop on WPEA project consultancy reports. The workshop was attended by 31 participants from related agencies. The workshop reviewed the following consultancy reports:
 - Supply Chain of Skipjack Tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) caught by Pole and Line in FMA714 and adjacent based at Sikka Regency;
 - Development of a Harvest Strategy Framework;
 - MMAF Policy on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation for Fisheries;
 - Climate Change Adaptation for Fisheries: Vulnerability, Impact and Risk;
 - Guidelines for Tuna Fishery in Response to Climate Change;
 - Application of an EAFM to tuna fisheries; and
 - MSC activities in Indonesia to combat IUU fishing.
- 4) 2018.03.21-23 (Philippines) – Philippines convened a Review Workshop on WPEA project consultancy reports. The workshop was attended by 42 participants from related agencies. The workshop reviewed the following consultancy reports:
 - Harvest Strategy: Determine Catch/Effort Limits in Para 25, CMM 2017-01;
 - Supply Chain Analysis and Certification Issues;
 - Tuna Value Chain Analysis;

- Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management; and
 - Policy of FAD (fish aggregating devices) management in the Philippines.
- 5) The WPEA project used to support 65 enumerators in Indonesia and Vietnam to collect catch and effort data from port sampling, over 20 support staff to encode data into databases, and convening of Data Review and Catch Estimates workshops to produce national total tuna catch estimates by species and by gear. However, 2018 data collection in Vietnam may be limited because of WPEA-SM budget limit in 2018 and delayed national approval of the NZ-funded WPEA-ITM project. The government of Indonesia partially supported data collection in 2018 and the rest was covered by the WPEA-SM project. Port sampling sites include:
- Indonesia: Bitung, Kendari, Sodohoa, Sorong, Majene, Gorontalo
 - Philippines: all landing sites in the Philippines (government supports all port enumerators; WPEA supports data management and analysis)
 - Vietnam: Binh Dinh, Khanh Hoa, Phu Yen, Da Nang, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan, and Bario-Vung Tau
- 6) 2018.04.9-13 (Vietnam) – Vietnam convened a Consultancy Expert’s Workshop to review the progress of WPEA project consultancies. The workshop was participated by 14 consultancies and other invited experts. The consultancies briefed their progresses and collect midterm comments from other experts. The following consultancies were reviewed for any further updates and refinement:
- Revision of national tuna management plan;
 - Review of Vietnam’s fishery legislation in line with WCPFC requirements;
 - Development of a harvest strategy framework (reference points and harvest control rules);
 - Revision of Vietnam’s tuna fishery profile;
 - Manual for sustainable tuna fishing practices;
 - Guidelines for the adaptive management of climate change impacts on tuna fisheries;
 - Guidelines for the capacity building of Vietnam personnel to cope with the impacts of climate change on tuna fisheries;
 - Application of EAFM to tuna fisheries in Vietnam;
 - Supply chain analysis and chain of custody in Vietnam tuna fisheries; and
 - Eco-labelling and catch certification for tuna fisheries in Vietnam.
- 7) 2018.04.10-14 (Indonesia) – Indonesia convened a Data review workshop in Bitung. This includes an annual practice of port sampling audit, proper implementation of data collection protocol, and database management by enumerators. Mr Peter Williams (SPC-OFP) assisted the process of data review and annual tuna catch estimates workshop in the three countries.
- 8) 2018.05. 24-29 (Philippines) – Philippines convened an annual data review and annual tuna catch estimation workshops. The total catch of oceanic tunas caught in 2017 was 236,483 metric tons.

PHILIPPINES	SKJ		YFT		BET		TOTAL
	MT	%	MT	%	MT	%	MT
Purse Seine	124,581	72%	44,146	26%	3,994	2%	172,724
Hook and line	13,780	25%	38,778	71%	1,800	3%	54,395
Others	4,878	52%	4,187	45%	335	4%	9,401
TOTAL	143,240	61%	87,111	37%	6,129	3%	236,483

- 9) 2018.06.4-8 (Indonesia) – Indonesia convened a Review Workshop on WPEA project consultancy reports. The workshop was attended by 29 participants from related agencies and

stakeholders. The workshop reviewed and considered the following topics and reports and produced identified potential risks and recommendations:

- The progress in the development of a harvest strategy framework in the archipelagic waters;
- The process of stock assessment and fishery management in Indonesia;
- Impacts of climate change on the fisheries and adaptive management for the capacity building of fishery staff and decision makers;
- Trial application of an EAFM to tuna fisheries in Sikka region in Indonesia;
- Supply chain analysis of skipjack tuna caught by pole and line in FMA 714 (archipelagic waters) and adjacent based at Sikka regency;
- Review of national fisheries legislation in line with the WCPFC CMMs;
- Review of a Manual for the Sustainable Fishing Practices;
- Revision of the Indonesian national Tuna Management Plan
- Introduction to One Data Policy in Indonesia; and
- Trial application of a risk assessment to tuna fisheries in the Indonesia’s archipelagic waters.

10) 2018.06.18-22 (Vietnam) – Vietnam convened a Review Workshop on WPEA project consultancy reports. The workshop, participated by 26 from government agencies, NGOs, university, and other programmes, reviewed the progress of the following consultancy reports to update and refine them:

- Revision of Vietnam’s legal framework in line with WCPFC requirements – gap analysis;
- Reference points and harvest control rules for Vietnam tuna fisheries;
- Tuna supply chain analysis, catch certificate and eco-label;
- Revision of Tuna Fisheries Profile;
- Application of EAFM to tuna fisheries;
- Guidelines for the adaptive management of climate change impacts on tuna fisheries;
- Guidelines for capacity building on climate change and tuna fisheries management;
- Development of a Manual on Tuna Sustainable Fishing Practices; and
- Revision of National Tuna Management Plan of Vietnam (NTMP).

11) 2018.06.20-23 (Indonesia) – Indonesia convened an Annual tuna catch estimation workshop, where Indonesia’s total annual tuna catches caught in 2017 was 466,267 metric tons.

INDONESIA (all gears)	Skipjack	%	Yellowfin	%	Bigeye	%	TOTAL
FMA 713,714,715	273,718	65%	137,501	33%	9,559	2%	420,778
FMA 716, 717	37,260	82%	7,459	16%	771	2%	45,490
TOTAL (FAO 71)	310,978	67%	144,960	31%	10,330	2%	466,268

- Fishery Management Area (FMA) 713-715 represents Indonesian archipelagic waters and FMA 716-717 represents the Pacific side of Indonesian EEZs.

12) 2018.06. 25-28 (Vietnam) – Vietnam convened an Annual data review and Annual tuna catch estimation workshop, where Vietnam’s total annual tuna catches caught in 2017 was 112,625 metric tons.

VIETNAM	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Albacore	TOTAL
Longline/Handline	0	15,677	1,004	N/A	16,681
Purse Seine	46,014	6,170	2,508	N/A	54,692
Gillnet	40,281	560	411	N/A	41,252
TOTAL	86,295	22,407	3,923	N/A	112,625

- 13) 2018.06.25-29 (Philippines) – Philippines convened a Review Workshop on WPEA project consultancy reports. The workshop reviewed the following consultancy reports:
- Progress of Harvest Strategy Work in the Philippines;
 - Risk assessment for selected by-catch and ETP species on selected tuna fisheries;
 - Review of the Philippines’ Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance Initiatives;
 - Climate Change Guidelines;
 - Application of Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM);
 - Progress of Tuna Supply Chain Analysis; and
 - Progress on certification system for the sustainability of resources.
- 14) 2018.08.8-16 (SC14) – WPEA project supports its participating countries to improve capacity in science so that they can contribute scientific processes of the Commission, management decisions and recommendations which will be forwarded to the Commission, and submission and defense of Annual Report Part 1 (Information on fisheries, research and statistics related to science). In this regard, the WPEA project supported one scientist from Indonesia and Philippines to participate in the 14th Session of the Scientific Committee (SC14), which was held in Busan, Korea, 8-16 August 2018. In the case of Vietnam, Vietnam government supported one fishery officer to attend SC14 in 2018.
- 15) 2018.09.17-18 (Vietnam) – There was a consultative meeting between the WCPFC Secretariat and Vietnam government to reorganize Vietnam’s project management team. Last August, Dr Pham Viet Anh, who served as the WPEA Project National Tuna Coordinator over the last eight years, has resigned his position as a government employee, and Vietnam government assigned two officials to support the WPEA project. WCPFC Secretariat also hired Dr Anh as a consultant to continue assisting Vietnam to finalize the project by early next year. In addition, the consultancy meeting also reviewed the progress of each consultancy and the finance status.
- 16) 2018.10.23-25 (Sub-regional Workshop, Vietnam) – The 2018 WPEA-SM Sub-regional, Three-country Workshop was held in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, from 23–25 October 2018. The theme of the workshop includes i) risk assessment and management of bycatch species and ii) preparation of a consultative forum at sub-regional level which is scheduled in late January 2019. Dr David Kirby (Australia) was invited to facilitate discussions on risk assessments. The workshop was attended by 23 representatives from the three countries, NGOs, and other agencies. The Workshop adopted a draft provisional agenda for the consultative forum.
- 17) 2018.11.3-8 (International Waters Conference) – The 9th IWC was held at Marrakech, Morocco and the project management team and country representatives attended the Conference. More information is available at <https://iwlearn.net/events/iwc9-2018>.

III. STATUS OF WPEA-ITM PROJECT

20. The 3rd phase of the WPEA Project, called the *Western Pacific East Asia Improved Tuna Monitoring Activity* (WPEA-ITM), funded by the government of New Zealand for the next five years, is in progress for its commencement. Project components include expanding the capacity of Enumerator Programs to gather fisheries catch landings and port sampling data, building the capacities and sustainability of fisheries observer programs, supporting additional national policy and providing legal reviews to improve tuna fisheries catch monitoring and governance, and adding to the capacities of national fisheries data management and analysis efforts. Mr Dale Withington has been hired since July 2017 to manage this project, which currently is scheduled to be completed in early 2022.

21. The period since July 2017 has been a transitional year between the WPEA-SM and WPEA-ITM projects. Full implementation of the new project has not yet eventuated due to delays in official approval and registration of the project by the three governments. Some causes of the delays are new national procedures for approving aid projects and some turnover in key senior officials in key ministries. The fisheries sector in each country has also experienced significant changes within about two years after the project was first designed, and a significant effort is currently made to adapt the project's activities, targets, indicators and budget to ensure effectiveness and sustainability.

22. Despite the delays, there has been some progress, including the process of official approval, registration of the project and the development of MOUs with the three Governments that are awaiting signatures. An MOU between WCPFC and SPC has been signed regarding SPC involvement and support for the new project. The project has supported the participation of representatives of the three countries to participate in SPC's 2018 Annual Tuna Data Review Workshop in Noumea. The new project also co-financed with the WPEA-SM Project the 2018 Annual Catch Estimation meetings in the three countries (one each in Viet Nam and the Philippines, and two in Indonesia). The project has supported the SPC's assistance to the countries with further development of their fisheries data management and analysis efforts, including country visits.

23. The 1st Project Steering Committee Meeting is scheduled in Honolulu on 7th December 2018, where decisions about country recommendations for changes in the Project's Activities, Targets, Indicators and Budget will be reviewed and finalized. Final approval of the adapted and updated Plan and Budget, along with full registration and approval of the project in the three countries, will ensure that full implementation of the project will be achieved in 2019.