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UPDATE ON THE WEST PACIFIC EAST ASIA (WPEA) PROJECT

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Prepared by Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam and the Secretariat

PURPOSE

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

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-SM Project

- 1) Project title: Sustainable Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the West Pacific and East Asian Seas
- 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 the 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 (10) recommendations to improve project effectiveness and enhancing the likelihood that project results will be sustained after GEF funding ceases, which were reviewed by the 4th Project Board Meeting in May 2017. The Report is available at <https://www.wcpfc.int/wpea>.

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-OFPP Project and a certain degree of momentum had been achieved. The second phase, however, contains areas of comprehensive components that were not part of the first phase, including areas of climate change, ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM), market-based approaches to sustainable fisheries, and development of harvest strategy elements. These additional areas, low level of preparedness, and limited budget rendered hard-to-achieve the project targets and a great challenge to achieve over the 3-year timeframe.

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 for 18 months, until 27 April 2019.

15. The WPEA-SM Project, which commenced in October 2014, officially concluded on 27 April 2019. Throughout this project, the three countries produced over 150 documents from over 70 workshops and conferences and over 30 consultancies. Key areas of the project outputs are development of a harvest strategy framework; adaptive management to the impacts of climate change; ecosystem approach to fisheries management; risk assessments; monitoring, control and surveillance issues; certification and supply/value chain analysis; FADs management; review of fisheries legislation; and fishing manuals for fishermen through consultancies, national workshops and sub-regional workshops with the three countries and international experts.. There have been six Project Board Meetings during the project period, where the last Project Board Meeting was held on 31 January 2019, in Boracay, Aklan, Philippines. In October 2019, the UNDP hired a consultant to conduct the project terminal evaluation.

SUMMARY OF KEY WPEA-SM ACTIVITIES IN 2018

16. 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

17. The project targets are listed in the *Project Results Framework* in the Project Document. To reach the targets, key guidelines identified were as follows:

Component 1

- a) Capacity building of the participating countries in science by supporting their participation to WCPFC technical meetings
- b) Improved mechanisms for monitoring of highly migratory fish stocks (HMFS) and IUU fishing
- c) Estimation of annual tuna catches by species and by gear
- d) Guidelines for the adaptive management of HMFS to address the impacts of climate change
- e) Update of national tuna management plans

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 and certification system
- d) Data collection from port sampling
- e) Observer programme to selected fisheries
- f) Trial application of EAFM

Component 3

- a) GEF-IW Learn Conference and PEMSEA East Asian Seas Congress
- b) WPEA project portal
- c) WPEA monitoring and evaluation reporting system

18. The process of implementing WPEA activities for the Secretariat 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 identified, and review and adjust the process of the planned activities in the following year. Specific steps include:

- a) Submission of proposals for each activity by the national coordinators to the Project Manager;
- b) Project Manager reviews and endorses the proposal and WCPFC wire-transfers budget to the country's official WPEA bank account;
- c) National project coordinators monitor local consultancies and arrange/prepare national workshops and sub-regional workshops;

- d) WCPFC Secretariat leads workshops to review the consultancy outputs and produce workshop reports;

In addition, the Secretariat reports the progress of the project, annual workplan and budget for next year and financial status to the Project Board Meetings, UNDP and the GEF.

19. Along with the 2019 annual work plans developed with the three countries, all remaining activities were completed. Key activities in 2019 include:

- a) Data collection from port sampling

The three countries continued to collect tuna catch by species and by gear from key tuna landing sites in the three countries. These data were the basis of their national annual tuna catch estimates.

- b) A sub-regional Consultative Forum on IUU Fishing

A Consultative Forum (CF) took place in Boracay Island, Malay, Aklan on 28-30 January 2019. The meeting was attended by representatives from the three WPEA countries (Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam), SEAFDEC, PEMSEA, UNDP, and the WCPFC Secretariat. The CF considered key components of cooperation and collaboration in tuna fisheries at sub-regional level and developed a proposed monitoring mechanism to address IUU fishing activities in the EAS oceanic tuna fisheries.

- c) Vietnam' Domestic Workshop for Reporting the Results of WPEA-SM Project

Department of Fisheries (DECAFISH) which conducted this project invited all relevant government agencies and introduced the outputs of the project. This meeting was held on 22nd of April in Nha Trang, one day before the Three-country, Sub-regional Workshop. The workshop report was produced.

- d) A Sub-regional, Three-country Workshop on Stock Assessments and Harvest Strategy

The last Three-country, Sub-regional Workshop was held in Nha Trang, Viet Nam, 23-26 April 2019. Dr Graham Pilling (SPC) was invited to introduce issues related to sub-regional stock assessments and the WCPFC harvest strategies. The workshop also considered initial thoughts on standardizing CPUE at sub-regional level.

- e) Philippine Tuna Catch Estimates Workshop

The 10th *WPEA National Stock Assessment Programme – Data Review Workshop* (WPEA-NSAP) and the 12th *Philippine Annual Tuna Catch Estimates Workshop* (PTUNASTAT) was held in Palawan, 23-28 May 2019. Fishery data from port sampling were reviewed and annual total tuna catch by species and by gear were estimated. Input data include data from port sampling, logsheets, industries, and other government agencies. SPC Data Manager was invited to proceed the estimation process.

- f) Consultation meetings with the three countries to review the progress of WPEA-SM Project

The Project Manager visited three countries to compile all project outputs with national project management teams. Over 150 documents were compiled as an output of this project.

STATUS OF WPEA-ITM PROJECT

20. The 3rd phase of the WPEA Project, titled the *Western Pacific East Asia Improved Tuna Monitoring Activity* (WPEA-ITM), funded by the government of New Zealand for five years, is in progress. Mr Dale Withington, who was hired in July 2017 as the Project Manager of this phase, resigned in early June 2019. Ms Alice McDonald was engaged in November 2019 as the new Project Manager. Key features of this phase include: i) expansion of the capacity of enumerators in collecting catch data from port sampling; ii) building the capacity and sustainability of fisheries observer programs; iii) supporting national policy and legal review to improve tuna fisheries monitoring and governance; and iv) improving the capacity of national fishery staff in data management and analysis.

21. Since the commencement of the WPEA-ITM Project in July 2017, it took almost two years to complete signing of the MOUs between WCPFC and the three countries: with Indonesia in December 2018, with Vietnam in January 2019, and with Philippines in May 2019. Despite these delays, the Secretariat has gone ahead and clarified an MOU with SPC in support of the new project activities. The first meeting of the WPEA-ITM Project Steering Committee (PSC) took place in Honolulu on 7th December 2018. The PSC covered i) review of project progress in each country; ii) finance status; iii) review of targets, indicators and activities; and iv) project management issues.

22. The three countries continued to collect tuna catch data at tuna landing sites throughout the year, which is the core area of the project. The Project supported enumerators in Indonesia and Vietnam to collect catch and effort data from port sampling. Data Review Workshop and Total Annual Tuna Catch Estimates Workshop were convened, assisted by Mr Peter Williams (SPC-OFP) to produce national annual total tuna catch estimates by species and by gear as shown in the matrix below. In 2018, the annual total tuna catch by species are shown in the matrix below. Total tuna catch in the three countries was 867,837 mt, which is about 32% of the WCPFC Convention Area catch of 2,716,396 mt in 2018.

	Skipjack		Yellowfin		Bigeye		
INDONESIA (all gears)	MT	%	MT	%	MT	%	TOTAL
FMA _s 713,714,715	215,010	54%	167,363	42%	15,755	4%	398,353
FMA _s 716, 717	76,432	60%	48,096	37%	3,818	3%	45,490
TOTAL (FAO 71)	291,442	55%	215,460	41%	19,573	4%	526,778
PHILIPPINES	MT	%	MT	%	MT	%	TOTAL
Purse Seine	106,857	70%	44,240	29%	1,523	1%	152,610
Hook and line	14,574	24%	44,994	74%	983	2%	60,551
Others	4,111	55%	3,123	42%	201	3%	7,435
TOTAL	125,542	61%	92,356	42%	2,697	1%	220,596
VIETNAM	MT	%	MT	%	MT	%	TOTAL
Longline/Handline	0	0%	16,500	67%	902	21%	17,402
Purse Seine	57,299	63%	7,683	31%	3,123	73%	68,105
Gillnet	34,229	37%	521	2%	276	6%	35,026
TOTAL	91,528	76%	24,704	21%	4,301	4%	120,463

23. In 2019, the three countries had several activities including port sampling, observer training, database training workshops, and data review and annual tuna catch estimates workshops. These activities are briefly listed in the matrix below.

Dates	Country	Title
Whole year	Indonesia, Vietnam	Data collection from port sampling
21-22 March	Vietnam	Observer planning meeting for Vietnamese tuna fisheries
25-26 March	Indonesia	Meeting for Observer Planning and Strategic Action Plan
27-30 March	Indonesia	Port Sampling Review Meeting in Bitung
8-12 April	All 3 countries	Participation in SPC's Tuna Data Workshop
31 April-04 May	Vietnam	Participation in SPC's Stock Assessment Workshop
23-28 May	Philippines	Data Review and Catch Estimates Workshop
20-21 June	Vietnam	Catch Estimates Workshop
24-26 June	Indonesia	Annual catch estimates workshop in Bogor
12-20 August	All 3 countries	Participation in SC15 Session
22-30 October	Vietnam	Training course for fishery observers in Vietnam
14-22 November	Vietnam	TUFMAN2 Training Workshop

Recommendation

24. WCPFC16 is invited to note this update on the WPEA Project.