



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE  
SIXTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**

**EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE**  
28 July - 15 August 2020

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

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**WCPFC-SC16-2020/ RP-JTF-02**  
**15 August 2020**

**SECRETARIAT**

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2020  
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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Steering Committee (SC) meeting of the Japan Trust Fund (JTF) in 2020 was conducted electronically through email correspondence. This was due to the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic that physical face-to-face meeting was not possible.
2. The Steering Committee's roles are i) to review the performance of projects; ii) to resolve any project implementation issues; iii) to share experiences in the implementation of projects; and iv) to learn from those experiences.
3. The Japan Trust Fund (JTF) Steering Committee meeting process in 2020 were as follows:
  - a) The Secretariat in consultation with JTF recipient countries prepared a JTF Status Report.
  - b) The JTF Status report was submitted to Japan for their review, queries and comments which was also posted in the WCPFC-SC16 website (<https://www.wcpfc.int/node/46478>).
  - c) The Secretariat in consultation with JTF recipient countries, prepared a report reflecting JTF recipient countries comments and their request for project extension (if any) in 2021, for further review, consideration and approval of Japan.
  - d) The 2020 JTF Steering Committee Report was prepared to include Japan's queries/comments and JTF recipient countries subsequent responses and requests for any extension.
  - e) The Steering Committee report (SC16-RP-JTF-02) was posted in the WCPFC-SC16 website.
4. The JTF contact list is in **Attachment A**.

## **II. REVIEW OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE**

5. The Steering Committee received updates on the status of implementation of each of the ongoing projects supported by the JTF (<https://www.wcpfc.int/node/46478>). The highlights are described below.

### **2020 PROJECTS**

#### **A. Kiribati: Kiribati Capacity Building for Harvest Strategy for 2020**

6. This project seeks to build capacity of Kiribati fisheries officers on harvest strategy (HS) work to enable them to fully participate in decision making process for HS as a member of the WCPFC. Kiribati received the funds in March 2020 and seeking assistance from SPC and others to conduct a virtual workshop with Fisheries Officers and Managers on Harvest Strategy. The national workshop which will engaged SPC staff and the attachments of Kiribati's staff with SPC will be delayed until such time travel restrictions are lifted. **Kiribati is requesting approval to carry over the funds for another year (2021) to complete the implementation of project activities which were delayed/deferred due to the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic.**

7. After reviewing and taking into consideration the unavoidable impact of COVID-19 pandemic, **Japan approved the request for extension.**

#### **B. Palau: Domestic Tuna Market Development Project**

8. This proposal seeks to strengthen and improve data collection system in Palau in order to understand the catch landings by vessel and the market structure in order to inform and advise future management decisions. The project activities have been ongoing with the following updates:

- i) There are currently two fishing vessels that are landing their catches in Palau as of January 2020.
- ii) Since April 2020, there has been a total catch of 2,410kg of YFT; 9,280kg of BET; and 4,450kg of OTH (other species).
- iii) The main local market includes: government agencies, hotels, restaurants, and wholesale stores.

9. Palau reported that they are currently facing some constraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although Palau currently does not have positive COVID-19 case, precautions remain in place until further notice. Such precautions have limited mass gatherings which have hindered their proposed work to conduct workshops and trainings on data sampling methods. However, other approaches (e.g. virtual training) are taken into consideration to carry on project activities as planned. **Palau is requesting approval to carry over the funds for another year (2021) to complete the implementation of their project activities.**

10. After reviewing and taking into consideration the unavoidable impact of COVID-19 pandemic to complete the implementation of project activities in Palau, **Japan approved the request for extension.**

#### **C. Tonga: Port sampling and data entry**

11. This activity would like to continue funding tuna data collection through its port sampling activities for 2020 including training of all new vessel masters, port samplers and artisanal data officers on e-reporting. It is also expected that data collection will be expanded to outer islands of Tonga.

#### **D. Tonga: Tonga Observer Programme**

12. This proposal aims to support training of Observers for both longline and purse seine including a refresher course for Tonga Observers on how to use the new shark ID keys, 2018 Observer forms, and LL-PS Debriefing Guides. The funding support is also expected to train at least one person to be a certified PIRFO Trainer.

#### **E. Tonga: Capacity building and strengthening of Tonga's Fisheries Legal Section**

13. The objective of the project is for capacity building and strengthening Tonga's Fisheries Legal Section by the recruitment of a paralegal officer to assist in research and administrative matters to help progress the ongoing legislative review that includes inclusion of WCPFC CMMs in the legislative framework..

14. Due to the differences in money exchanges from USD to Tongan Pa'anga (TOP), Tonga expects that there will be some unspent funds from the projects by the end of the year (2020). **Tonga is seeking approval to:**

- a) **To utilize remaining funds in related activities from the current proposals;**
- b) **To help with the data collection equipment and related materials for port sampling and observer program; and**

- c) **To carry over the funds for another year (2021) to complete the implementation of project activities that were delayed/deferred due to the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic.**

15. **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 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 that will not involve the purchase of hardware and non-expendable equipment, in accordance with the JTF's project document; and c) Japan also approved the request for extension.**

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

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

16. 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.

17. Cook Islands project update indicated that activities are in progress. Though they are facing some challenges such as:

- i) limited staffing capacity and competing priorities that caused delays in progressing the work;
- ii) Cook Islands Government's plan of action regarding the COVID-19 pandemic this year has shifted the Health Ministry's focus, taken up in preparing and activating plans regarding the pandemic.

18. However, in July 2020, negotiations have commenced to firm up the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Health Ministry and Marine Resources Ministry to formalize the arrangements between the parties regarding the Competent Authority functions. **Cook Islands is requesting to carry over the funds for an additional year.**

19. **Japan approved the request for extension.**

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

20. This project intends to assist the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) 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 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.

21. Cook Islands project update indicated that activities for this project are ongoing. Although they are facing some challenges that includes Cook Islands Government's plan of action regarding the COVID-9 pandemic this year that caused Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) to re-design the project to include possibilities for a mixed mode of delivery (i. Content Development and ii. Delivery of Training). As the border restrictions continue to remain in place, splitting the project into two components became the best option for progressing the project.

22. Cook Islands planned to have two cohorts of participants that will receive the training over a two-week period at separate intervals. It is expected that the project activities will be completed in 2021. **Cook Islands is requesting to carry over the funds for an additional year.**

23. After reviewing and taking into consideration the unavoidable impact of COVID-19 pandemic, **Japan also approved the request for extension of this project.**

#### **H. Fiji: The Fiji Port Monitoring Exercise**

24. The Fiji Port Monitoring Exercise aims to track the movement of fish from the vessels, to onshore facilities and onward to the final destination. This project will provide useful information related to chain of custody, provide checks against other fisheries data and reporting, and help to close loopholes in the current landing levy system.

25. Fiji informed the Steering Committee through their country report update that port monitoring activities are ongoing. Enforcement officers have been carrying out the port monitoring exercise from point of landing, through processing and export.

26. A total of 187 vessels were port monitored with a total tonnage of 7,682.25 throughout the duration of the project. In addition to port monitoring, they expanded the monitoring works to companies' warehouse to inspect and monitor commodities for export prior to shipment. A total 58 vessels were inspected with 6.39 mt of swordfish exported fresh to either New Zealand or USA.

27. Fiji has concluded the project activities this year (2020) and the final project report will be submitted to the Steering Committee.

#### **I. 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)**

28. The Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority (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.

29. This project has the following objectives: i) to conduct training for NFMRA officers on best practice of at-sea boarding and inspection procedures; ii) to develop Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) for NFMRA on at-sea boarding and inspection; and iii) to advise NFMRA on gears and equipment necessary for NFMRA officers in conducting at-sea boarding and inspection.

30. This Nauru project under the JTF experienced extended delays due to numerous logistical challenges and obstacles since it was first proposed.

31. Nauru acknowledges the JTF Steering Committee's dilemma and seeks understanding to the ongoing issues beyond Nauru's control in implementing its project.

32. **Nauru is requesting for an extension of this project in 2021 due to the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic.**

33. After reviewing and taking into consideration the numerous logistical challenges and obstacles Nauru faced since this project was first proposed, **Japan approved the request for extension.**

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

34. The project objectives are i) 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); and ii) to prepare officers to fully understand the HSBI procedures and the application of the CMM 2006-08 in the WCPF Convention area.

35. Tuvalu informed the Steering Committee through their project report update that COVID-19 has presented numerous logistical challenges to conduct the training. New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industry has agreed to deliver this training in-country and due to the practical nature of the training, it will not be ideal to deliver the training on virtual mode. Tuvalu received its new Guardian Class Patrol Boat last year and there has been number of new officers recruited that needs to be trained. As the authorized HSBI vessel, the boarding and inspection evolutions for this training will be the ideal opportunity to test out the patrol boat new operating procedures as well as identifying the gaps and realign with HSBI procedures.

36. It is envisaged that the second training will also provide a trainer component for staffs from Fisheries and Police Maritime to deliver ongoing & future trainings, and to maintain the level of knowledge and skill to conduct HSBI as per WCPFC-CMM-2006-08.

37. Tuvalu proposed to run similar training/workshop to make use of the remaining funds and to extend the capacity building activity within the Tuvalu Fisheries Department, Maritime Police officers and other relevant stakeholders on HSBI.

38. **Tuvalu Fisheries Department has decided to request for an extension of this project to 2021.**

39. After reviewing and taking into consideration the unavoidable impact of COVID-19 pandemic to conduct the needed training, **Japan approved the request for extension of this project.**

## **III. OTHER ISSUES**

40. JTF recipient countries would like to thank Japan for their understanding, continued support and assistance through the JTF.

41. There were no other issues raised.

## **IV. CLOSE OF STEERING COMMITTEE**

42. The email correspondence for the JTF Steering Committee was closed after all issues have been addressed through email exchanges.

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**EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE**

28 July - 15 August 2020

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**LIST OF JTF CONTACTS**

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