



ANNUAL REPORT FOR JAPAN TRUST FUND 3rd PHASE 2021

Annual Report for Japan Trust Fund 3rd Phase 2021

(Includes details of ongoing projects from previous years)

Report as of 25th March 2021

Notation

- “The Project”: WCPFC Project on Capacity Building in Fisheries Statistics, Regulation and Enforcement for Small Island Developing States
- “Five-year Program”: Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 3 Program as of today
- “projects”: Member’s research activities funded by the Project as annually selected under the Five-Year Program

I. Background

In December 2005, the Government of Japan informed the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) of its intention to provide an extra-budgetary contribution to WCPFC for the purpose of assisting developing state Members build capacity on fisheries statistics, regulation and enforcement. This resulted in a 5-year project entitled “WCPFC Project on Capacity Building in Fisheries Statistics, Regulation and Enforcement for Small Island Developing States (the Project)” to be funded by the Government of Japan. The target recipient States of the Project are mainly SIDS members of the WCPFC. The first 5-year Phase 1 Program was completed in 2011. Given the success of, and support for, the Project; the Fisheries Agency of Japan sought and successfully secured a budget for the second Phase 2 Program for the next five (5) years, commencing 2012. The objectives and terms of reference for the Phase 2 Program were similar to, but build on the previous Program, with an emphasis on enforcement and compliance. The second phase Program was extended on an annual basis to include 2017 and 2018.

In 2018, the Fisheries Agency of Japan, in recognition of the usefulness of the JTF for capacity building in fisheries statistics, regulation and enforcement for SIDS and the SIDS desire to continue this cooperation scheme, successfully secured further funding for the Phase 3 Program. The Phase 3 Program is the same as the previous two programs in principle, but with an emphasis on new fisheries management procedures, including harvest strategy and new monitoring technology related projects with the belief that the projects supported by the Phase 3 Program should be more advanced than those of the previous programs.

This report includes details of the projects delivered over the previous years; presents the selected proposals for implementation in 2021; and the ongoing projects from previous years with their associated administrative issues.

II. Administration

The 2020 Japan Trust Fund (JTF) project was coordinated and administered by the WCPFC Secretariat in cooperation with Japan (Mr. Hirohide Matsushima, Assistant Director, International Affairs Division, Fisheries Agency of Japan and Mr. Akira Bamba, Section Chief, International Affairs Division, Fisheries Agency of Japan).

The selection of the 2021 projects was administered by Japan (Mr. Hirohide Matsushima and Mr. Akira Bamba) in collaboration with the JTF advisory group, comprising the WCPFC Secretariat; the Pacific Community - Oceanic Fisheries Program (Dr. Graham Pilling); and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (Dr. Wetjens Dimmlich).

The total JTF in 2021 is USD 232,821.00. After deduction of the 7.5% administrative fee of USD 17,461.58, the balance available for 2021 projects amounts to USD 215,359.42. The same total amount was allocated in 2019 and 2020.

The *Call for Proposals of the Japan Trust Fund for 2021* was sent out on 17th November 2020 (WCPFC Circular 2020-135) and the Extension of Deadline on the Call for Proposals was sent out on 23rd December 2020 (WCPFC Circular 2020-144). Six (6) proposals were received by 29th January 2021, requesting close to USD 258,311. Due to the shortfall of available 2021 JTF, project budget proposals need to be reduced. A Summary of approved JTF Work Plan for 2021 is in **Attachment 1**.

All JTF projects conducted are found on the WCPFC website at <https://www.wcpfc.int/doc/japan-trust-fund-summary-projects-2012-date>. A brief report of completed JTF projects in 2020 is in **Attachment 2**.

III. **On-going projects from previous years**

This section summarizes the status of ongoing projects that were not completed yet from previous years and their associated administrative issues.

1) Project #1 (2020, Phase 3 Program): Kiribati Capacity Building for Harvest Strategy for 2020

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 requested to carry over the funds for another year (2021) to complete the implementation of project activities which were deferred due to the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. After reviewing and taking into consideration the unavoidable impact of COVID-19 pandemic, Japan approved the request for extension.

2) Project 2 (2020, Phase 3 Program): Domestic Tuna Market Development Project (Palau)

The initial period of the Project was delayed due to COVID-19 and project extension was requested as a result. Although some of the project objectives are not met at the moment, the main purpose of the Project was uninterrupted by the circumstances of COVID-19. An enhanced data collection system to understand Palau's fishery was established and data has been collected since. Additional supplementing information was collected to reflect

the market system since the full implementation of Palau National Marine Sanctuary (PNMS,) which aimed at analyzing BOFI's sales and market structure.

Since January 2020, there has been only two fishing vessels from two companies, Pacific Fresh Tuna Company (PFTC) and Kuniyoshi Fishing Company (KFC). However, PFTC ceased its fishing activities only a month after it started operations in January. KFC started fishing and remained the only fishing company landing catches in Palau throughout 2020. The total catch of both fishing vessels totaled in 28,808.95 kg with PFTC accounting for only 1.7% of the total catch as a result of a month's worth of fishing activities. KFC accounts for the remaining 98.3% of the total catch throughout the 11-months period. For this reason, the report will only focus on the annual catch landings and species composition of KFC's catch. Figure 1 shows KFC's annual catch. It shows a general trend of increasing catch from February to September then a sudden decline of catch in November then a slight increase in December.

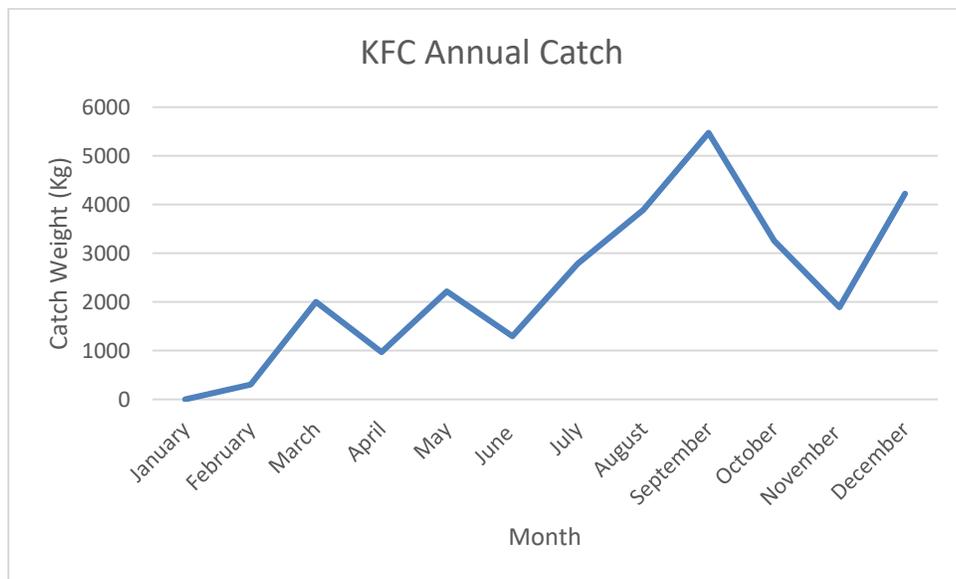


Figure 1: KFC's Annual Catch from February to December 2020

The majority of the total annual catch is tuna with bigeye as the most catch with a total weight of 11,351 kg and YFT with a total of 10,163 kg. Tuna accounted for 75% of KFC's total catch (Figure 3), with the remaining species composed of: 14% swordfish, 3% black marlin, 3% sailfish, 2% pacific blue marlin, 2% others, and 1% blue marlin.

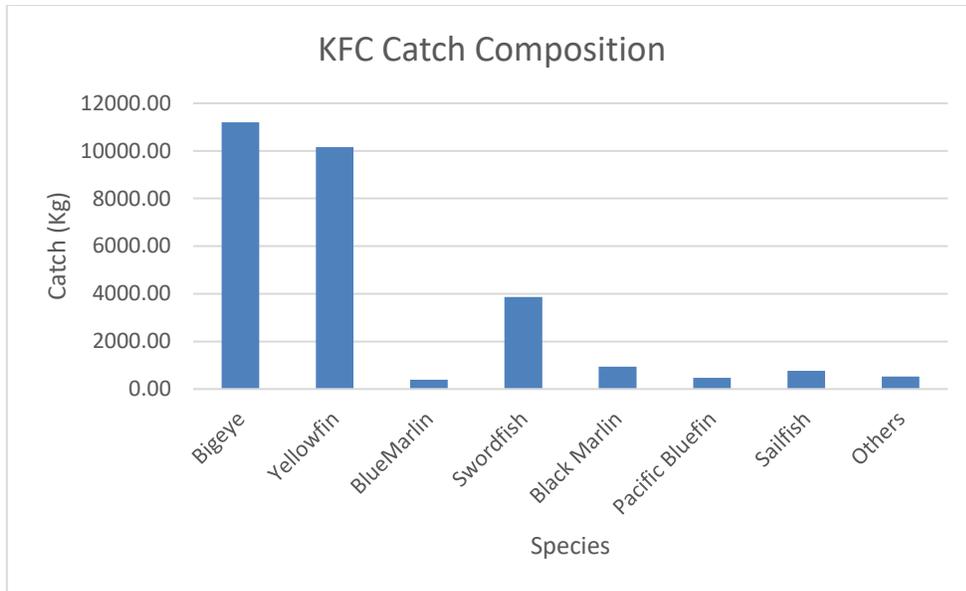


Figure 2: KFC's Catch Composition from February to December 2020

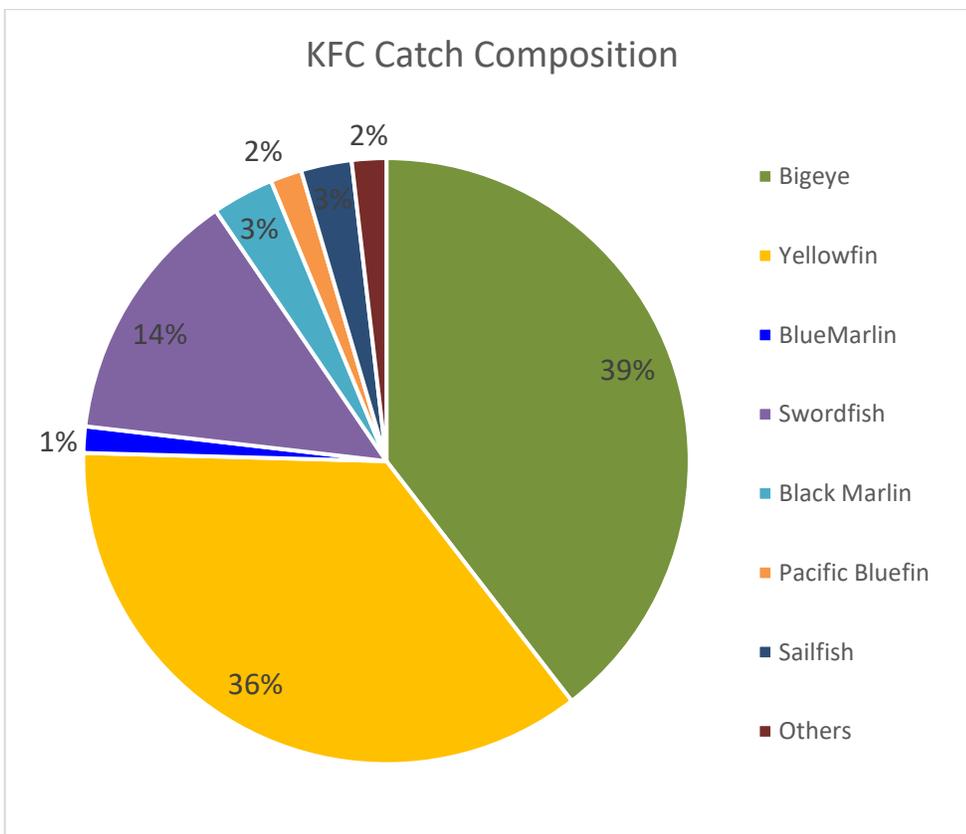
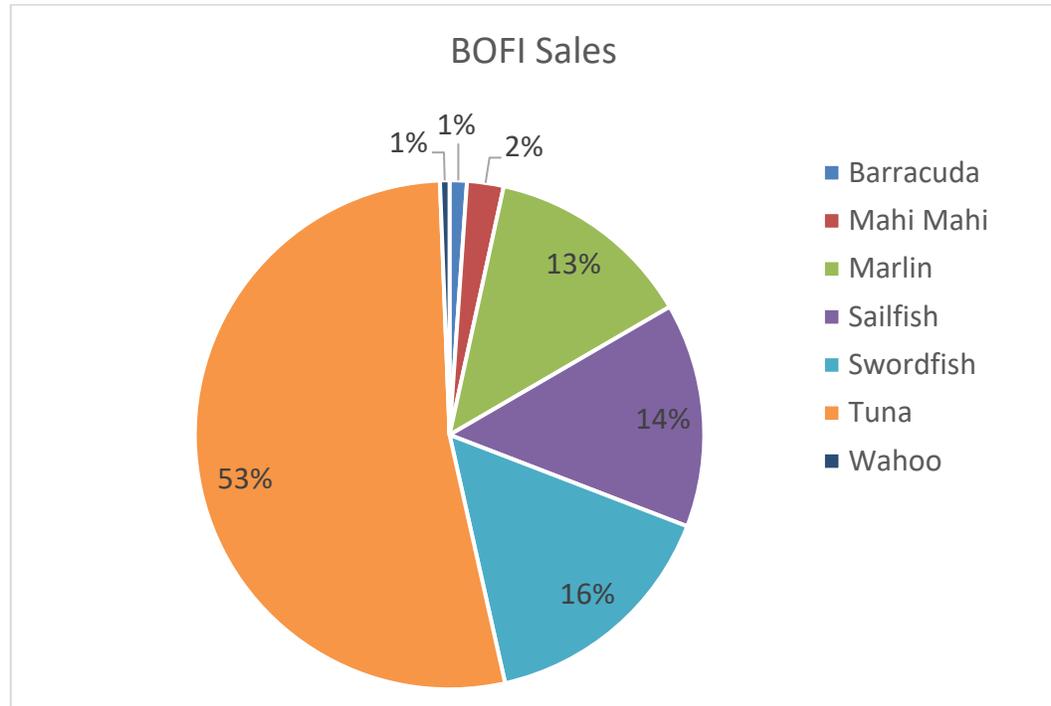


Figure 3: KFC Catch Composition by percentage

The Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment, and Tourism (MNRET) contracted its rights to buy 10% of pelagic longline catches to Belau Offshore Fishers Inc. (BOFI), a Member-based marketplace, buyer, and seller. With the enhanced data collection

system, BOFI's sales data based on the 10% purchasing right was collected and analyzed (some still to be analyzed). Majority of BOFI's sales is tuna, accounting for 53% of the total sales.



Palau is currently facing constraints due to the COVID-19. Although Palau currently does not have positive COVID-19 cases, precautions still remain in place until further notice. Such precautions have limited mass gatherings which have hindered our proposed work to conduct workshops and trainings on tuna handling and fishing methods. However, other approaches (e.g. virtual training) are taken into consideration to carry on project activities as planned.

There is still data to be analyzed such as the market type and demand preference. BOFI is still to populate its newly launched database system so there is not enough data manually entered to be analyzed. But until then, there should be enough data collected and analyzed for the final report. Efforts are being in place to organize and schedule virtual training/workshop on fish handling and fishing techniques. A detailed financial report will also be included with the final project report.

Noting the progress of Palau on its planned activities despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan approved the extension of this project in 2021.

3) Project #1 (2019, Phase 3 Program): 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.

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 has shifted the Health Ministry's focus, taken up in preparing and activating plans regarding the pandemic.

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 requested to carry over the funds for an additional year (2021). Japan approved the request for extension and the work of this Project is currently ongoing.

Project Updates

Task	Progress	Comments	Future Activities
<p>MoU – Develop and finalize a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Health and MMR to provide legal powers to MMR as a CA</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>The Ministry of Health administers the Food (Fish Export Processing) Regulations 2006 in the Cook Islands under which the Competent Authority rests. The Secretary of Health has delegated authority to MMR, Offshore Fisheries Mr Andrew Jones as an authorized officer to carry out the responsibilities of the Competent Authority since 2013.</p> <p>Negotiations commenced in 2016 to transfer the Competent Authority functions from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Marine Resources via the Marine Resources Bill 2017. The section of the Bill pertaining to the Competent Authority was completed. A</p>	<p>This work will be planned for 2021</p>

		<p>number of changes that brought about new legislation impacted on the MMR Bill (particularly the Marae Moana Act). The Bill did not proceed due to the need for MMR to include further matters in the Bill and is likely to be ready for cabinet in late 2021.</p> <p>In the meantime, preparation commenced to develop an interim Memorandum of Understanding between the Health and Marine Resources Ministry to formalize the arrangement between the parties regarding the Competent Authority functions, until the MMR Bill is passed into legislation.</p>	
HACCP Strategy – Development of a national HACCP strategy	In progress	Draft policies for the CA have been developed. Internal discussions on these drafts will be the next step before going through the consultation phase with stakeholders.	This work will be planned for 2021
Implementation plan – Development of an implementation plan for the HACCP strategy, including completion of Part 2 training	Yet to start	This work has been moved to 2020/21. Initially the work was supposed to be implemented during 2019, however due to staffing capacity in 2019 and COVID-19 restrictions present (2020),	This work will be planned for 2021

		completion of this work may be delayed to 2021.	
Regulations – Develop and finalize regulations, standards, policies and a CA Checklist	In progress	Draft policies for the CA have been developed. Internal discussions on these drafts will be the next step before going through the consultation phase with stakeholders	Review current drafts to be circulated internally for commenting by December 2020.
Calendar - Finalize Competent Authority training and implementation calendar for 2019	Yet to start	Initially the work was supposed to be implemented during 2019, however due limited staff capacity this was delayed to 2020. Furthermore, due to COVID-19, we are experiencing further delays.	This work will be planned for 2021
Awareness – Create awareness and education information packs for stakeholders and the general public on CA requirements, standards and legislation etc.	Yet to start	Internal discussions on this have begun within the Offshore Division.	Internal discussion on the awareness programme and info packs will commence in October 2020.
Consultation – Hold consultations with stake holders and the general public on CA work	Yes to start		This will be done 2021
Inspections – undertake inspections to train fisheries officers on HACCP CA requirements	In Progress	1 x Fisheries Officer (FO) participated in 2x inspections during 2019. The remaining FO to undertake sanitation inspections once travel is safe.	Further inspections have been put on hold until travel restrictions have been lifted.

4) Project #2 (2019, Phase 3 Program): Improving the participation and engagement in international fisheries forums (Cook Islands)

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.

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 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.

It was also noted that training modules will include:

- International fisheries arrangements – hard and soft law
- Regional fisheries management organizations and regional fisheries organizations in the Pacific
- Governance, structure and procedural engagement
- Relationships between Pacific regional fisheries organizations and WCPFC
- Decision-making processes and implementation requirements
- Project – specific research topic relating to Pacific engagement in RFMOs / international fisheries arrangements

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. After reviewing and taking into consideration the unavoidable impact of COVID-19 pandemic, Japan also approved the request for extension of this Project in 2021.

Project Progress

Task	Progress	Comments	Future Activities
Develop a Tender for proposals to carry out the content development and delivery of the training.	In progress	A tender according to the CI Gov procurement policy was created in early 2020. Due to COVID-19 and the closure of Cook Islands Borders in March 2020, the scope of the Tender as written became difficult to carry out.	The second stage Terms of Reference for delivery of the training is under construction and will be circulated for quotes by the end of August 2020 and that a selection will be made during the month of September. It is expected that the Project will be completed in 2021.

		<p>A review of the scope of works was conducted and it was resolved that the Project be split into two components: Content Development first and then Delivery as better options for the methods of delivery of training became available.</p> <p>In accordance with the CI Govt Procurement Policy, the option to seek quotations was implemented and a Terms of Reference for Content Development circulated to eligible consultants on and offshore.</p> <p>Quotes have been received and are currently being scrutinized by the MMR tender/quotes team to make the final recommendation to the MMR Secretary.</p> <p>The Content Delivery phase is expected to commence by the end of July 2020 and be completed by October 2020.</p>	<p>It is planned that two cohorts of participants will receive the training over a two-week period at separate intervals.</p>
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5) Project #4 (2018, Phase 2 Program): Capacity Building training for Tuvalu Fisheries and Maritime Police officers to conduct High Seas Boarding Inspections (HSBI)

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.

Tuvalu has completed its Project, but due to the support from other external funding, there was a balance of AUS\$16,668.61. Tuvalu proposed to run similar training/workshop to make use of this funding, and to extend the capacity building activity within the Tuvalu Fisheries Department, Maritime Police officers and other relevant stakeholders on HSBI.

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.

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.

Tuvalu Fisheries Department has decided to request for an extension of this Project to 2021. 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 in 2021. If things (travel restrictions and border closure) don't improve this year, it is likely that Tuvalu will be requesting for further extension.

6) Project #2 (2015, Phase 2 Program): 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)

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. 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.

This Nauru project under the JTF experienced extended delays due to numerous logistical challenges and obstacles since it was first proposed. The first request for extension was granted in 2016. In 2017, Japan agreed for another extension. Noting that in April 2017, Nauru expected arrival of trailers for their multi-purpose boats, and thereafter they would be able to launch/retrieve the boats to and from the sea safely, after these the projects' at-sea boarding and inspection training would proceed. The former JTF Coordinator, Mr. Wataru Tanoue visited Nauru in 2018 and fully understand the difficulties Nauru faced. After Nauru has taken delivery of the trailers, there has been another setback that is due to the unseaworthiness of their boats. JTF recognizing the importance of safety at sea has granted another extension into 2018 to allow the boats to be overhauled and the project activities be conducted. The project funds have not been utilized and the project activities has yet to be implemented. In August 2019 JTF Steering

Committee, Nauru confirmed that a boat necessary for the project implementation were already secured. Nauru requested for approval to carry over the funds for an additional year (2020) and Japan agreed to the request for extension.

In August 2020, Nauru acknowledges the JTF Steering Committee's dilemma and seeks understanding to the ongoing issues beyond Nauru's control in implementing its Project. Nauru is requesting for an extension of this Project in 2021 due to the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. 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.

Nauru regrets that at this stage, it is still unable to commence its project due to the difficulty in organizing the travel of the consultant/trainer due to the border closures and travel from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the travel ban and the unknown end to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, Nauru will have difficulty in utilizing the current JTF grant; therefore, Nauru would like to propose the JTF Committee and NFMRA discuss an alternative approach that is in-line with the current project.

Attachment 1. Summary of JTF Work Plan for 2021 (Year 3, Phase 3 Program)

#	Beneficiary Member(s)	Contacts	Project Title	Purpose/Summary	Budget (USD)
1	Solomon Islands	Mr. Derrick Tagosia Electronic Reporting and Monitoring Coordinator Email: DTagosia@fisheries.gov.sb Phone: +677 39143/30264	Training and supporting of our Solomon Islands (SI) Electronic Monitoring (EM) Analysts to continue analyzing EM records from EM systems installed on Longline fishing vessels	This Project seeks financial support for Solomon Islands EM Analysts to continue analyzing EM records after September 2021, to provide useful data and information to fisheries management for decision making and to other national and regional stakeholders as mandated by SI membership agreements and efforts to ensure the sustainability of tuna resources for future generations.	39,768.75
2	Solomon Islands	Mr. Derrick Tagosia Electronic Reporting and Monitoring Coordinator Email: DTagosia@fisheries.gov.sb Phone: +677 39143/30264	Training of Solomon Islands Fisheries Observers on the Electronic Reporting Observer eObs App to collect data electronically on observer trips to strengthen MCS processes	This Project is expected to train observers on how to use iFIMS electronic reporting system that includes use of electronic reporting system to enter and send daily trip data to the ministry for monitoring, control and surveillance purposes and trial out the said system until such a time where observer trip reporting can be paperless.	41,291.25

3.	Tonga	<p>Dr. Tuikolongahau Halafihi CEO for Fisheries Email: supi64t@gmail.com; thalafihi@tongafish.gov.to; ceo@tongafish.gov.to</p> <p>Mr. Poasi Ngaluafe Head of Fisheries Science Division Email: poasi.ngaluafe@tongafish.gov.to</p> <p>Ms. Lavinia Vaipuna Head of Offshore Section Email: lavinia@tongafish.gov.to</p>	Support and maintain high level data collection and to improve management of tuna fisheries in Tonga, as well as providing awareness on conservation of tuna species	This activity would like to continue funding tuna data collection through its port sampling activities for 2021 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.	39,515.00
4	Tonga	<p>Dr. Tuikolongahau Halafi CEO for Fisheries Email: ceo@tongafish.gov.to</p> <p>Mele To'a 'Atuekaho Deputy CEO, Compliance Division Email: meletoaatuekaho@gmail.com</p> <p>Ms. Kalolaine Manuopangi Observer Coordinator Email: kmanuopangai@gmail.com</p>	Capacity building and strengthening of Tonga National Observer Program	This Project seeks to strengthen Tonga's national observer program by: <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 encouraging and promoting quality observer data as well as creating a performance-based incentive to keep observers on the job. 	37,800.00
5	Tonga	<p>Dr. Tuikolongahau Halafihi CEO for Fisheries Email: supi64t@gmail.com; thalafihi@tongafish.gov.to; ceo@tongafish.gov.to</p>	Capacity building and strengthening of Tonga's Fisheries Legal Section	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	5,697.10

				matters to help progress the ongoing legislative review that includes inclusion of WCPFC CMMs in the legislative framework.	
6	Vanuatu	<p>Mr Tony TALEO Deputy Director (Oceanic) Vanuatu Fisheries Department Tel: +678 7748056/ 5463595 E-mail: ttaleo@vanuatu.gov.vu</p> <p>Mr John MAHIT Observer Programme Coordinator Vanuatu Fisheries Department Tel: +678 7101857/ 5967727 E-mail: jomahit@vanuatu.gov.vu</p> <p>Fisheries Department, Private Mail Bag 9045, Port Vila, Vanuatu</p>	Feasibility and Cost-Benefit Assessment of Electronic Monitoring on Vanuatu fishing vessels	The purpose of the present Project is to investigate appropriate logistical arrangements through which hard drives from e-monitoring equipment can be reliably transferred from the vessels concerned to the VFD and analyzed in a timely manner. As part of the Project, an assessment of the costs and benefits of e-monitoring arrangements will be made, and compared to the costs and benefits of the Vanuatu National Observer Programme, which currently employs 56 human observers. The results of the study will guide Vanuatu's policy on e-monitoring implementation going forward.	51,287.32
	Sub-total			Sum of project budget requested	\$215,359.42
	WCPFC	Aaron Nighswander aaron.nighswander@wcpfc.int	7.5% administrative fee	Overhead	\$232,821.00 x 0.075 = \$17,461.58
	Grand Total			Total JTF for 2021	\$232,821.00

Attachment 2. Brief Report of the Completed JTF Projects in 2020

Project #3 (2020): Support and maintain high level data collection and to improve management of tuna fisheries in Tonga, as well as providing awareness on conservation of tuna species (*Port Sampling*)

A. Overview

Good quality tuna data is required to monitor the Western and Central Pacific Ocean tuna fishery. Tuna, a migratory species, requires consistent data collection and sampling across its range. This Project allows Tonga to continue collecting tuna data from longline fleets, strengthening the artisanal tuna data collection, developing e-Reporting with basic training for the skipper, port samplers and fisheries officers to use the electronic device for reporting, and hiring data entry personnel daily recruitment. This Project provided continuous support, with minor changes, to the projects approved annually by the JTF since 2010.

Tonga is recognized as a Small Island Developing State by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's Convention, consequently acknowledging the financial assistance that the country will require during the set-up phase of the WCPFC. This Project ensured a continuation of the tuna sampling data that started in Tonga in 1995. Port sampling data provided an essential source of length and species composition, fundamental for the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's (WCPFC) regional stock assessments. This is one of the significant reasons that Tonga is totally in support of maintaining high-level data collection and acknowledging the need to improve tuna fisheries' management.

The number of fishing vessels (both local and foreign) entering the Tonga tuna fishing fleets increased in 2019, especially the foreign fishing vessels. This means that there will be more vessel coming in port for unloading, then Tonga should be well prepared with staff capacity for data collection. This is part of the development program being implemented by the Tonga Government through the Ministry of Fisheries (MoF) in trying to develop its tuna fishery. Therefore, the number of port sampling activities (with 100% sampling coverage) will increase with the number of vessels joining the fishery. Artisanal tuna data collection has been implemented to extend to smaller islands and the main island of Tongatapu. Therefore, more staff will be engaged in this Project with training needs on operating the electronic devices used for artisanal data collection.

In late 2019, with the assistance of SPC, Tonga was able to conduct training on the ONSHORE system for port sampling on tuna vessels and also a refresh of using the ONBOARD system to record logsheets electronically. There will be the same assistance for the refresh of using TAILS to collect artisanal tuna data and coastal fisheries.

B. Project Objectives

- 1) To fund tuna data collection (port sampling) over one full calendar year (2020) in Tonga.
- 2) To fund artisanal tuna data collection over one full calendar year (2020) in Tonga.

- 3) To enhance the capacity of fisheries personnel on data management and reporting by attending the annual Tuna Data Workshop at SPC Noumea.
- 4) To empower staff capacity to enable the collection of data and enter into the database.
- 5) To conduct E-Reporting training of all new tuna vessel masters, port samplers and artisanal data officers.
- 6) That the excess amount of fund from each month (when the estimated number of vessels did not reach the target, which means less than 20 unloading duties on tuna vessels per month) will improve management and provide awareness of data collection.
- 7) To enhance Artisanal tuna data collection with extension to the outer island.

C. Results and Discussions

The year 2020 was a challenging year for Tonga Tuna fisheries due to the continue worldwide effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though Tonga is still COVID-19 free, closing down the overseas market and the international border affect tuna export, especially the domestic fleets that export fresh chill tuna primarily to mainland US and Japan sashimi market. The foreign fishing vessels continue to export frozen tuna to its overseas market shipped on a cargo container.

Despite the challenges faced, the fishery tried its best to maintain its fishing operation. The port samplers continue to collect all sort of data with a 100 % coverage of logsheets, unloading, and port sampling data regardless of the slight decrease in the number of trips made by the fishing vessels as the impact of COVID-19. We are glad to acknowledge Tonga's financial support from the JTF project in 2020 to support its tuna data collection and awareness program.

Tonga has now recruited three (3) more daily paid labourers to assist in data scanning, port sampling and data entry to TUFMAN-2. The expansion of TAILS data collection to communities is planned for April this year (2021), with more training activities for data collector from communities.

The Project also assisted and improved Tonga's electronic reporting through the OnBoard and OnShore data collection and data submission. Skippers and vessel captains were trained on a one-to-one basis, depending on when the vessel comes to port. The OnBoard Apps will be put in place for trial in one of our Foreign Fishing Vessels in the coming 2 to 3 weeks' time again with training. Details are summarized below.

There was 186 port sampling made by 10 Foreign Fishing Vessels and 6 Domestic Vessels in 2020. Within these trips, 16 Logsheets used the OnBoard application for its data submissions, whereas 101 port sampling logsheets submitted using the OnShore applications. With the Artisanal Data Collections, there were 376 logsheets submitted from 'Eua and Vava'u.

However, there were remaining funds from this Project. These remaining funds will still be used for the same purpose and continue to assist in financing port sampling activities, focusing in objectives 6 and 7 of this port sampling proposal.

D. Comments/Conclusions/Feedbacks/Suggestions/Recommendations

On behalf of the Tonga Government and its' Ministry of Fisheries, we would like to extend our great appreciation thanks to the Government of Japan for granting us this financial support through the Japan Trust Fund. We witness this Project's benefit on our current port sampling program by providing employment to Tonga people and completing our obligation to WCPFC and other regional organizations. Malo 'aupito!!!!



Project #4 (2020): Tonga Observer Programme

A. Overview

Tonga, a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) and a Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission member, has a national observer programme. Tonga's National Observer Programme was audited by WCPFC Secretariat in March 2011, reviewed again in 2015, and is accredited as a WCPFC ROP. Due to lack of resources, Tonga relies on regional organizations, SPC and FFA, to develop its observer programme, in particular, observer and debriefer training. Like most FFA member countries, Tonga does not have a certified trainer and heavily relies on SPC and FFA. Tonga has been fortunate in the past years to have several observer training conducted by FFA and SPC hosted in Tonga. This allows us to have more nationals trained as observers for the programme's start, albeit with a high turnover rate. As the work of observers increased in the region over the years, the demand for observers escalated; thus, more certified fisheries observers' requirements grew.

Due to limited resources nationally and in the region, not only financially but also with regards to the availability of certified trainers, observer training opportunities were currently limited, which is one of the challenges faced by national observer programmes. Besides, as the observers are not permanent staff of the Ministry but are employed on an on-call basis, another challenge is the high turnover rate of trained and qualified observers. Currently, Tonga has around 15 active observers. Thus, it is crucial to provide incentives to keep the observers on the post for a long time, such as providing career paths and performance-based incentives.

Terms and Conditions for foreign fishing vessels licensed to fish in our EEZ require 100% observer coverage and 20% observer coverage for our LL Domestic vessels. MOU with the Cook Islands has increased the demand for observers to board LL and PS vessels fish in the Cook Islands waters. There was also a high demand for placement of our Observers on the US Treaty. Currently, Tonga has 15 longline fishing vessels licensed, with 10 licensed as foreign fishing vessels and 5 domestic longline fishing vessels with some in the pipeline.

SPC conducted LL observer training earlier this year which 8 observers were trained and certified as PIRFO LL Observers. Due to high demand from US Treaty Vessels and Cook Island vessels, more observers are needed to prepare and certified as PS Observers. This will help rotate observers to experience the difference in deploying in different vessels in different countries.

Tonga has one Trainer Trainee, Mr Lopeti Tukuafu, to be trained up as a certified PIRFO Trainer. Mr Tukuafu has met the criteria outlined in the SPC "Road to Becoming a PIRFO Trainer" <http://www.spc.int/Oceanfish/en/certification-and-training-standards>.

B. Project Objectives

1. To upgrade LL Observers to PS Observers

2. Refresher Course for Tonga Observers on how to use the new shark ID keys, 2018 Observer forms and LL and PS Debriefing Guides.
3. To train up one Trainer Trainee as a certified PIRFO Trainer.

C. Results and Discussions

The year 2020 was a challenging year for Tonga Observer Programme due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. The Capacity Building and Strengthening Tonga Observer Programme were affected because of the border closure. The SPC expert Mr Siosifa Fukofuka, couldn't make it to Tonga to conduct the training. Despite the challenges faced, we still managed to complete the training virtually.

A three-week virtual observer training was conducted with SPC, starting on November 30th – December 18th, 2020, recruiting four new observers, upgrading 5 LL Observers to PS Observers. And this was the 4th training for the Trainer Trainee Mr Lopeti Tukuafu. Also, this training was a refresher training for observers that were at port at that time.

The Project also ensured that we meet the observer placement coverage outlined in the term and conditions. That is a 100% observer coverage for foreign fishing vessels, whereas a 20% coverage for the domestic fishing vessels. It also ensured that the quality of the observer data collected by the observers is improved.

Nonetheless, there were remaining funds from this Project. Tonga will use it for the same purpose and continue financing the observer activities to ensure Tonga complies and meets its obligations to WCPFC and other Regional organizations.

D. Comments/Conclusions/Feedbacks/Suggestions/Recommendations

In conclusion, the expected outcomes of the project were achieved. Tonga Observer Programme would like to thank the Government of Japan for all the financial support rendered through WCPFC. We are looking forward to another successful proposal for 2021. Malo 'Aupito!!!



Project #5: Capacity Building and Strengthening of Tonga Fisheries Legal Section, 2020

A. Overview

The South Pacific island of Tonga is a party to the WCPF Convention and a member of the Western and Central Pacific Commission (“Commission”). The Ministry of Fisheries (hereinafter referred to as “the Ministry”) is the focal point of contact and the implementation agency of all fisheries matters in Tonga.

The Ministry has a Legal Section with one lawyer (‘Legal Officer’) under the Chief Executive Officer’s direct supervision. The Legal Officer’s core functions include reviewing the current legal framework to implement conservation and management measures (‘CMMs’) adopted by WCPFC and other actions regarding the tuna fisheries aiming at ensuring the sustainability of our tuna resources while maximizing economic returns, combatting IUU fishing and enhancing social benefits for our people.

In carrying out its task, the Legal Officer is progressing work in implementing CMMs at national level by way of ongoing legislative review and reviewing of terms and conditions of tuna fisheries. In light of that, there are several tasks required to be done at national level such as conducting of public consultation more to raise public awareness regarding proposed amendments. The employment of the Administrative Assistant has been very helpful in the performance of legislative research and administrative assistance to progress the processes. Therefore, the continuation of her employment is crucial to the success of current and future activities in the Legal section.

B. Project Objective

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.

C. Results and Discussions

The Administrative Assistant has been providing great assistance in progressing the work in the Legal Section both in the main island and the outer islands. This assistance has greatly contributed in progressing the various tasks relating to ongoing review of the law and terms and conditions of fishing vessels to ensure that they are in line with CMMs. Moreover, as a result the employment of the Administrative Assistant has been very helpful in the performance of legislative research and administrative assistance to progress the process.

D. Comments/Conclusions/Feedbacks/Suggestions/Recommendations

The Legal section continues to function well with the great assistance provided by the Administrative Assistant through research and performance of administrative arrangements for the Legal section. Continuation of the employment of the Administrative Assistant is sought

for with anticipation that it would be approved. Tonga Fisheries would like to acknowledge with appreciation the financial assistance from the Japanese Government through the Japanese Trust Fund (JTF) towards Tonga Fisheries Legal section. I also acknowledge with appreciation the administration assistance rendered by WCPFC Secretariat. Finally, I wish to continue collaborating with the JTF project in funding of our proposed projects for the year 2021.

Project #1 (2016): The Fiji Port Monitoring Exercise

A. Overview

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

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

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

B. Project Objectives

- a) To monitor the onshore landing and in port transshipment process in accordance to issued landing and or transshipment permits.
- b) To collect the port monitored vessel's landing summaries from the processing facility and/or the cold storage facility.
- c) To cross validate the onshore landing and/or in port transshipment process against the logsheet submitted by the monitored vessels and the standardized landing summaries submitted by the processing companies and/or cold storage facilities.

C. Results and Discussion

Port Monitoring Activities 2019:

Month	No. of vessels port monitored	Breakdown by Flag	Total tonnage monitored (KG)
August	10	2 Fiji, 7 China	778,000
September	14	2 China, 10 Fiji, 2 Vanuatu	722,040
October	12	10 Fiji 2 China	1,210,280
November	22	10 Fiji 12 China	2,018,380

Port Monitoring Activities 2020:

Month	No. of vessels port monitored	Breakdown by Flag	Total tonnage monitored (KG)
January	6	4 China, 2 China	278,600
February	7	5 Fiji, 2 China	277,900
March	15	10 Fiji, 5 China	1,563,200

April	20	16 Fiji, 3 China, 1 Vanuatu	2,005,850
May	12	7 Fiji, 5 China	560,250
June	18	12 Fiji, 6 China	890,500

Swordfish Export Monitoring 2019:

Month	Processor	Number of Vessels	Total tonnage Inspected (KG)
August	2 Processors	10	3200
September	2 Processors	11	1,550
October	2 Processors	7	1,830
November	1 Processor	9	2,230
December	1 Processor	12	2,180

Swordfish Export Monitoring 2020:

Month	Processor	Vessels	Total tonnage Inspected (Kg)
January	2 Processors	7	2,250
February	2 Processors	6	1,240
March	2 Processors	7	1,750
April	2 Processors	7	2,100
May	2 Processors	4	1,300
June	2 Processors	3	890

Notes:

1. A total of 136 vessels port monitored and with a total tonnage of 10,305,000.00 kgs from August 2019 – June 2020.
2. A total of 83 vessels swordfish catch was monitored and with a total tonnage of 20,520 kgs from August 2019 – June 2020.
3. We expanded the monitoring works to companies' warehouse to inspect and monitor commodities for export prior to shipment.
4. The project funds were fully utilized to complete the project activities.

Challenges:

1. Initially the project was to end in 2018 but due to cyclone all human resources was diverted to rehabilitation works, hence the delay to carry out the port monitoring exercises.
2. We also had a change in government policy, so the fund had to be directed to reserve bank and disseminated from there to the Ministry which took months to be released.

D. Comments/Conclusions/Feedbacks/Suggestions/Recommendations

- a) The Fiji Port Monitoring Exercise intended to track the movement of fish from the vessel to onshore facilities and onward to the destination. This project provided useful information relating to chain of custody, provided checks against other fisheries data, traceability, and reporting.

- b) A total of 136 vessels were port monitored with a total of 10,305,000.00 kgs throughout the duration of the project. In addition to port monitoring, we expanded the monitoring works to companies' warehouse to inspect and monitor commodities for export prior to shipment. A total 83 vessels were inspected with 20,520 Kg of swordfish exported fresh to either New Zealand or USA.
- c) The Japan Trust Fund has been fundamentally useful to carry out this project and we would sincerely like to Thank the Government of Japan for the grant.
- d) Fiji surely looks forward to engaging for more grants in the future to carry out such important works towards country's Fisheries management and development programs.