



## WPEA-ITM STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

3 February 2023 – Online

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### Meeting Report

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#### 1. Opening of the meeting

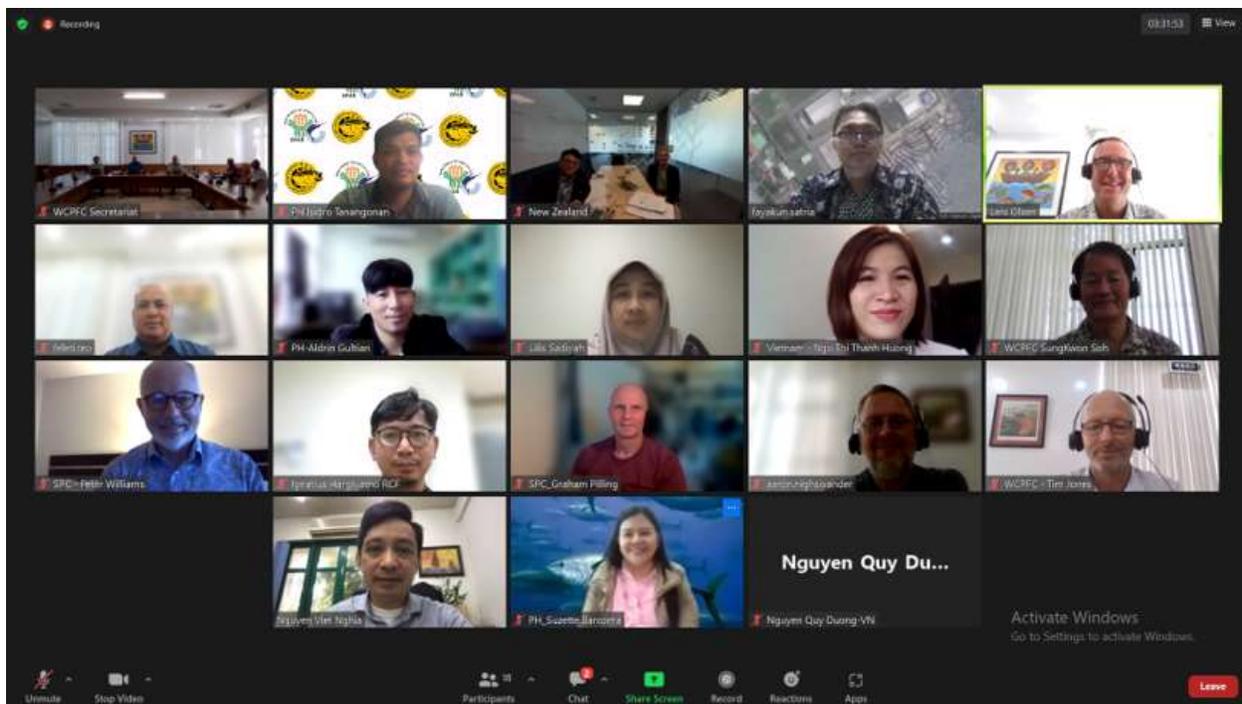
The WCPFC Executive Director, Mr. Feleti Teo, opened the meeting and welcomed all delegates from the three participating countries (Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam) as well as the funder of the project, the government of New Zealand. He also acknowledged SPC, the WCPFC Secretariat, and the project manager, Lars Olsen. The ED noted the pandemic related challenges faced by the project but that with the loosening of pandemic constraints, project activities have started to pick up and that notable progress had been made within countries. He thanked the three countries and the project manager for their hard work in continuing this work.

The Executive Director expressed appreciation for the no-cost extension to March 2025 granted by New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ MFAT) to undertake remaining activities and to fully utilize project funds due the delays associated with the pandemic. This avoided the need to urgently find a successor donor and would give the project time to be organized for the next phase of work. The ED then introduced the co-Chair, Rio Yoon from NZ MFAT.

Mr. Yoon also welcomed participants to the meeting and thanked the participating countries for their continued commitment to this very important work. He expressed his thanks for being able to meet the project team in DaNang, Vietnam last year. Mr. Yoon then introduced Stephen Harris, the new head of Pacific Oceans and Fisheries for NZ MFAT. He expressed New Zealand's gratitude to the WCPFC Secretariat, partner organizations and participating countries for their steadfast efforts to improve tuna monitoring and data management to support sustainable fisheries management and to reduce IUU fishing. He also acknowledged the progress made by the project despite challenges due to the pandemic.

Mr. Yoon noted the importance of the Steering Committee to provide strategic guidance and oversight to achieve desired project outcomes and to ensure efficient implementation of the project. MFAT noted their excitement to hear about cross cutting issues and key challenges faced by the project. He noted that it is very timely to think about the future of the WPEA project and how the benefits of this project continue on in the future.

The meeting was co-Chaired by Mr. Teo and Mr. Yoon, a full list of participants is provided at Attachment 1. A group photo is provided below.



## 2. Adoption of the agenda

The draft agenda was adopted, as provided in Attachment 2. The agenda was supported by the SC meeting record from last year, the 2022 Annual Progress Report, the Draft WPEA-ITM 2023 Workplan and Budget (excel spreadsheet), the Evaluation MFAT Management Response to the Western Pacific East Asia Tuna Monitoring Mid Term Evaluation, and a draft TOR for the proposed gap analysis work. All of these were circulated to all participants in advance of the meeting.

## 3. Noting of the 2021 meeting record

The meeting record from the 2021 Steering Committee was noted and adopted.

## 4. Project implementation

### 4.1. Status of Activity Implementation and Expenditure

The Project Manager thanked New Zealand for the extension to March 2025 and then gave the Committee a summary of progress in 2022 against each of the project outputs. He noted that due to the pandemic travel restrictions and changing domestic circumstances, many activities were not possible during the first half the year, but things started to open up in mid-2022. Much of the project work continued online with some in hybrid format. Scheduling was particularly challenging the second half of the year with the “pent up” meeting demand and the normally busy time of year, but critical data collection activities were maintained despite the challenges. There continued to be improvements to data quantity and quality, and benefits to

national and regional management of tuna. Overall, the estimated expenditure for the project in 2022 was almost USD 530,000.

During the discussions about the various outputs, Vietnam noted that they currently have 8 Observers included in their national budget (Output 3) and that they held stakeholder workshops for both the National Tuna Management Plan and the Provincial Tuna Management Plan. They also noted that there were 10 PTMPs developed.

Indonesia noted that they did hold their Annual Catch Estimates workshop in a hybrid format, noting that costs for the workshop were not supported by the WPEA-ITM project along with their planned workshops on shark data and longline logbook improvements. These issues were due to the lack of an implementing agreement with the WPEA-ITM project in 2022.

#### **4.2. Update on the Grant Funding Arrangement**

New Zealand confirmed the no cost extension of the project to March 2025 that was negotiated in late 2022, noting that all work is to be completed by the end of 2024. Mr. Yoon also drew attention to the importance of the gap analysis and country exit strategy work for planned for 2023.

Indonesia thanked New Zealand for the project extension and asked if the process for submitting proposals would be the same for the remainder of the project as it has been, which New Zealand confirmed. The ED also noted the importance of the gap analysis and country exit strategies along with the need for the project to continue and for development of a next phase to start as soon as possible.

#### **4.3. Project implementation against Results Framework**

The Project Manager then gave a high-level summary of the project progress against the long-, medium- and short-term outcomes described in the Results Framework. The Committee noted that tangible progress has been made over the years against each of the outcome levels.

Indonesia added to the discussion that their National Tuna Management Plan is compatible with international and national regulations. The Philippines noted they are reviewing their National Tuna Management Plan in 2023.

### **5. Management responses to the Mid-term Evaluation**

The Project Manager introduced the document showing the New Zealand management responses to the recommendations in the Mid-term Evaluation. Each of the recommendations and responses was shared with the Committee, noting that all recommendations were at least partially agreed. New Zealand will be publishing this document on their system along with the document being posted on the WCPFC WPEA website. Indonesia sought clarification on the meaning of partial agreement. The Project Manager clarified that it meant that all the recommendations were adopted with some responses being nuanced due to budget or situational changes.

## **6. Reflections - Strategic guidance to ensure effective delivery**

### **6.1. Report from participating countries on cross-cutting issues**

Each of the countries gave a brief presentation on how cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth and disadvantaged, welfare, safety and environmental linkages are and can be incorporated into WPEA-ITM activities.

Indonesia noted that with the recent restructure, BRIN is now at the national level and will be working on cross cutting issues with other ministerial level agencies and programmes in Indonesia. They are all subject to a national gender equality policy. It was noted that across most national field and managerial level posts, the general gender breakdown is about 60% male and 40% female in Indonesia. There was an acknowledgement that gender and other cross cutting policies need to be strengthened at the provincial level across Indonesia. There is not as good of an awareness at this level and more work needs to be done with various partner agencies and NGOs to improve this. More time will be needed to expand this awareness.

The Philippines noted that females are mostly in office work positions while in field positions such as Observer, it is mostly male. They also noted that there is a need to increase salaries across the board to attract more youth into the fisheries field of work. Consideration of enumerator work site locations vs where these staff live is also needed.

Vietnam noted that most project activities are conducted by males including observers. There are a number of females in the data collection, port sampling and data input fields. With the recent reorganization of DFish, they are hoping to integrate more females into the fisheries field in the years to come.

### **6.2. Opportunities for knowledge/best practice exchange among participating countries**

The Project Manager highlighted a number of activities that occurred in 2022 that did well to promote knowledge and best practice exchange among the WPEA countries. These were: the Tri Country technical meetings, Harvest strategy workshops, Stock assessment training, Observer cost recovery tour, and the planned Observer training for 2023. All of these activities are times when the countries get together and are able to share experiences.

Indonesia then discussed their plans to hold an implementation workshop for their National Tuna Management Plan developed in 2020-21. They also expressed their desire for more Tri country workshops, particularly focusing on harvest strategies and stock assessments in their region to help inform national decisions. Of the twelve enumerators that were lost in Bitung due to the previously mentioned funding issue, four have been hired back to keep the work going for the time being. Indonesia is looking forward to being able to utilize WPEA support to bring on more enumerators in 2023. They also note they lost some port sampling support from other agencies in 2022 and while they still have some NGO support for now, there may be some difficulties after 2025. They are keen for SPC support to audit their port sampling program.

Indonesia is also interested in exploring cooperation with other WPEA countries, perhaps with a workshop, on the topic of climate change.

The Philippines appreciated harvest strategy and stock assessment workshops with the other WPEA countries that are specifically focused on region 5 of the WCPO. With the rollout of their NSAP Edges app in January of 2002, the Philippines will be looking to follow up with additional workshops in their regions to expand this system in 2023. This can be used to improve logsheet data collection and coverage for purse seine, ring net and hand line fisheries. BFAR noted they are ready to support Indonesia and Vietnam for their shared observer training in the last half of the year, with trainings scheduled in June and November.

Vietnam shared a recap of activities they undertook in 2022 along with activities they intend to complete in 2023. They noted the need for an official letter to approve the 2023 work plan. This will be followed up by the Project Manager. Vietnam is keen to explore additional funding to support harvest strategy development and cost norms for fisheries data collection in Vietnam.

New Zealand finished the discussion with their support for the great cooperation between the countries.

### **6.3. Key issues/challenges for project implementation**

The discussion then turned to key issues and challenges encountered by each WPEA country. Indonesia started by highlighting the lack of an implementing arrangement in 2022 along with some continued challenges in finalizing it for 2023. It is taking longer to do this than expected. They also noted that with their reorganization, 5% of project funds will be recovered by the organization for overhead. The Project Manager noted this will need to be accounted for in project proposals as we only have the budgeted amounts for each activity. Indonesia inquired if some activities could proceed without the finalized implementing arrangement. This will be discussed offline with the Project Manager.

The Philippines noted their need for financial support for their annual catch estimates workshop due to national budget pressures along with the need for additional support to continue the rollout of the NSAP Edges app into three regions. SPC and the Philippines noted the need for follow up work after the trials in 2024.

Vietnam shared that there were still some differences in data forms and collection protocols between WCPFC and domestic systems. There was also still some reluctance for allocating budget for fisheries data at the provincial level in some provinces due to a lack of the cost norms. Changes and restructuring DFish created disruptions and reluctances for implementing activities and changes in the legal frameworks for managing the official development assistance also created delays in approving and balancing budgets. The pandemic related restrictions did restrict many of their activities in the first half of the year including those of observers and data collectors. They also noted a decrease in the number of tuna vessels in 2022. Another

challenge they have is that they need staff capacity development in the local provincial locations along with better protocols and procedures for the approvals for data collected regionally to be shared nationally.

## **7. Going Forward**

### **7.1. Costed work plan for 2023**

The costed work plan for 2023 was presented to the Committee by the Project Manager. He noted that there was about US \$1 million left for the remaining two years and that the countries had budgeted most of this for 2023. This will mean that significantly less will be available for 2024, but it is anticipated that not all activities will be able to be finished in 2023 with the remaining unspent to be allocated to 2024. The Committee noted the costed workplan.

Indonesia noted that their data collection workshop may need to be moved to early 2024 so they have enough data to validate considering the collection program in Bitung is to resume in 2023. SPC agreed with this assessment in that port sampling data is needed to run this workshop. SPC will fit in with whatever schedule is needed by Indonesia.

### **7.2. Sustainability and transition planning**

This discussion focused around the draft TOR for the gap analyses that was circulated to everyone before meeting. The Project Manager reviewed the suggested amendments from New Zealand and the Committee endorsed the TOR to proceed to advertisement as soon as possible. The Committee agreed that it will be very helpful to recruit the right person for this important piece of work. Indonesia and the Philippines agreed with this and supported this work going forward.

## **8. Other Matters**

The discussion of other matters focused around outreach and communication. The Project Manager reiterated that this (small) portion of the budget was not utilized in 2022 and is not in the budget for 2023 due to prioritization of other activities. The Project Manager suggested that outreach for the project be focused between the WPEA-ITM project and the key decision makers within each WPEA country to increase uptake and buy in of project activities.

Both Indonesia and the Philippines encouraged the Project Manager to participate physically in major activities such as annual workshops as this is a good opportunity to engage with key fishery managers of each country. There have been challenges encountered previously in meeting physically with the WPEA-ITM Project Manager due to COVID-19 especially during the Observers Study Tour last November 2022. Indonesia suggested their national tuna conference in May and the Philippines suggested their annual catch estimates workshop in May would be a good opportunity for the Project Manager to engage with key fisheries managers.

Indonesia asked if the WPEA information on the WCPFC website would also soon be available in a mobile friendly format. Tim Jones from WCPFC shared that by the end of 2023 all WCPFC web materials would be available in mobile friend formats. Indonesia also suggested that with all the good data collected in the WPEA project, there could be some good opportunities to publish some peer reviews scientific articles.

## 9. Close of Meeting

As the meeting closed the ED shared that this would be his last meeting with the WPEA team as his time as the ED at WCPFC was ending in March. He thanked all participants for their great work and effort. New Zealand, together with other participants, thanked the ED for the outstanding support to the WPEA ITM Project and wished him the best for his next journey.

The co-chairs thanked all participants for their contribution to the productive Steering Committee deliberations and the meeting was closed at 3:30pm (Pohnpei time) on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2023.

### Attachment 1. Participant List

<b>Indonesia Delegation</b>		
Mr. Fayakun Satria	Director	RCF/BRIN
Ms. Lilis Sadiyah	Senior Scientist	RCF/BRIN
<b>Philippines Delegation</b>		
Ms. Suzette Barcoma	Science Research Specialist II	NFRDI
Mr. Isidro Tanangonan	Aquaculturalist I	BFAR
Mr. Rafael Ramiscal	Chief, Capture Fisheries Division	BFAR
<b>Vietnam Delegation</b>		
Mr Vu Duyen Hai	National Manager	DFISH
Mr. Tran Dinh Luan	General Director of Capture Fisheries Department	DFISH
Mr. Nguyen Quy Duong		DFISH
Ms. Ngo Thanh Huong	Official of Department of Science, technology and International Cooperation	DFISH
Mr. Nguyen Viet Nghia	Vice Director	RIMF

<b>Partner Organisations</b>		
Mr. Stephen Harris	Head of Pacific Oceans and Fisheries	MFAT
Mr. Rio Yoon	Senior Adviser Pacific Fisheries	MFAT
Mr. Graham Pilling	Deputy Director FAME (OFP)	SPC
Mr. Peter Williams	Principal Fisheries Scientist	SPC
Mr. Feleti Teo	Executive Director	WCPFC
Mr. SungKwon Soh	Science Manager	WCPFC
Mr. Aaron Nighswander	Finance and Administration Manager	WCPFC
Mr. Tim Jones	IT Manager	WCPFC
Mr. Lars Olsen	WPEA Project Manager	WCPFC

*Participation: 17 attendees (3 female, 14 male)*

## Attachment 2. Meeting Agenda

Western Pacific East Asia Improved Tuna Monitoring Activity (WPEA-ITM)

### WPEA-ITM STEERING COMMITTEE

*Online Meeting*

Friday 3rd February 2023

11:30am – 3:30pm (Pohnpei, FSM time)

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#### AGENDA

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**1. OPENING OF THE MEETING**

*NZ MFAT and WCPFC will provide brief opening remarks. The Executive Director and the NZ MFAT representative will co-chair the meeting and the Project Manager will act as rapporteur.*

**2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

**3. NOTING OF 2021 MEETING RECORD**

**4. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

**4.1. Status of Activity Implementation and Expenditure**

*Project Manager will give a summary of activities and expenditures completed in 2022.*

**4.2. Update on the Grant Funding Arrangement**

*NZ MFAT will discuss the Letter of Variation to the Grant Funding Arrangement extending the project to March 2025.*

**4.3. Project implementation against Results Framework**

*Project Manager will give a summary of project implementation against the Results Framework.*

## **5. MANAGEMENT RESPONSES TO THE MID-TERM EVALUATION**

*Project Manager will give an update on the management responses to the Mid-Term Evaluation along with how it will be published and what recommendations will be taken forward.*

## **6. REFLECTIONS - STRATEGIC GUIDANCE TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE DELIVERY**

### **6.1. Report from participating countries on cross-cutting issues**

*National Coordinators will discuss how cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth and disadvantaged, welfare, safety and environmental linkages are and can be incorporated into WPEA-ITM activities.*

### **6.2. Opportunities for knowledge/best practice exchange among participating countries**

*National Coordinators and project service providers (SPC/WCPFC) will discuss how shared activities can be leveraged for improved project outcomes.*

### **6.3. Key issues/challenges for project implementation**

*National Coordinators and the Project Manager will share key issues and challenges experienced in implementing the WPEA-ITM project with a focus on how these issues and challenges can be addressed.*

## **7. GOING FORWARD**

### **7.1. Costed work plan for 2023.**

*Project Manager present the costed work plan for 2023 with a tentative schedule for delivery of outputs for 2023.*

### **7.2. Sustainability and transition planning**

*Project Manager will present the draft Terms of Reference for a consultancy to undertake a formal gap analysis for each country covering observer programmes, data collection and data analysis. This Gap Analysis will be used as an exit strategy and as an indicator of future needs that may require funding assistance after the conclusion of this project.*

**8. OTHER MATTERS**

*The Committee will discuss any other matters arising including how communications and outreach within countries can be leveraged for enhanced project execution and outcomes.*

**9. CLOSE OF MEETING**