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**ANNUAL REPORT FOR JAPAN TRUST FUND  
THE FOURTH PHASE  
*(Covering 2025 Activities including Approved Projects for 2026)***

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**JTF-AR-2026**  
31 March 2026

**Participating Countries and the Secretariat**

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# Annual Report for Japan Trust Fund The Fourth Phase

*(Covering ongoing 2025 project activities including approved projects for 2026)*

March 2026

## Notation

- “The Project”: The WCPFC Project on Capacity Building in Fisheries Statistics, Regulation and Enforcement for Small Island Developing States
  - ✓ Phase 1 Program (2006 – 2011)
  - ✓ Phase 2 Program (2012 – 2018)
  - ✓ Phase 3 Program (2019 – 2023)
  - ✓ Phase 4 Program (2024 – 2028)
- “Five-year Program”: Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3 Program
- “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 the WCPFC for the purpose of assisting the developing state Members’ capacity-building on fisheries statistics, regulation and enforcement. This resulted in a 5-year project entitled the “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 the Project, the Fisheries Agency of Japan sought and successfully secured a budget for the 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 built on the previous Program, with an emphasis on enforcement and compliance. The Phase 2 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 Japan Trust Fund (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 a belief that the projects supported by the Phase 3 Program should be more advanced than those of the previous Programs. The current Phase 4 Program is built on the previous phase program.

This report includes details of the projects delivered over the previous years; presents the selected proposals for implementation in 2026; and the 2025 ongoing projects including their associated administrative issues.

## II. Administration

The 2025 JTF project was coordinated and administered by the WCPFC Secretariat in cooperation with Japan (Mr Takeshi Miwa, International Affairs Division, Fisheries Agency of Japan).

The selection of the 2026 projects to be funded by the JTF among several proposals submitted by the WCPFC Members was administered by Japan (Ms Yayoi Otani, International Affairs Division, Fisheries Agency of Japan) in collaboration the WCPFC Secretariat.

The total JTF for 2026 is USD 145,082. The 2026 JTF was slightly reduced compared to 2025 due to depreciation in the currency exchange rate of Japanese Yen which resulted in budget reduction in terms of US dollars.

The *Call for Proposals of the Japan Trust Fund for 2026* was sent out on 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2025 (WCPFC Circular 2025/72) and another circular (WCPFC Circular 2025/94) was sent on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2025 to extend the deadline to 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026. Five (5) proposals were received. Due to the limited budget for 2026 JTF, prioritization of the project proposals was done and was based on the objectives of the JTF and the evaluation of the JTF Steering Committee. A Summary of the JTF Work Plan for 2026 is in **Annex 1**.

All JTF-funded project summaries since 2012 are compiled in one document [\*Japan Trust Fund Summary of Projects. 2012 to Date\*](#) posted on the WCPFC website (under Key Documents/Implementation of Article 30 of the Convention). Brief reports of completed JTF projects in 2025 are in **Annex 2 and 3**.

### III. Progress of Ongoing Projects from Previous Years

Year <sup>1</sup>	Beneficiary Member(s)	Contacts	Project Title	Objectives	Budget (USD)
2023	Palau	<p>Ms. Persis Omelau, Acting Director Bureau of Fisheries Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Environment P.O. Box 117, Koror, Palau, 96940 Email: <a href="mailto:omelaupersis@gmail.com">omelaupersis@gmail.com</a></p> <p>Keith Mesebeluu, Policy Specialist/Acting Chief Email: <a href="mailto:keithmesebeluu@gmail.com">keithmesebeluu@gmail.com</a></p> <p>Mr. Everson Sengebau, EM Officer Observer Email: <a href="mailto:ebs6ya@gmail.com">ebs6ya@gmail.com</a></p> <p>Ms. Zilah Oiterong, Fisheries Licensing and Revenue Officer Email: <a href="mailto:dirremeang@gmail.com">dirremeang@gmail.com</a></p>	Development of Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring (ER/EM) Program for the Division of Oceanic Fisheries of the Bureau of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To assess and develop a fisheries electronic reporting and electronic monitoring program for information gathering and sharing.</li> <li>To address known gaps in data collection in the longline fishery and enhance the capacity of fisheries personnel on proper methods of data collection through ER/EM.</li> <li>To work in line with the newly amended and adopted WCPFC CMM 2013-05 on Catch and Effort Reporting, CMM 2014-03 on Standards, Specifications and Procedures for the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels, FFA's Regional LL EM objectives, and Palau's Blue Prosperity Plan to improve the availability and Accessibility of quality-assured information for scientific and compliance purposes and contribute to improving economic viability of longline fisheries.</li> </ol>	45,500.00
<p><b>Status:</b> This project supports Palau's development of a national Electronic Reporting (ER) and Electronic Monitoring (EM) program for its longline fishery, aligned with WCPFC conservation and management measures, FFA regional objectives, and Palau's Blue Prosperity Plan. Progress has been made through stakeholder engagement and capacity building activities, including an in-country ER/EM training workshop conducted in September</p>					

<sup>1</sup> Year when the Project was approved

2023 with support from PNAO, and a multi-agency consultation workshop held in December 2023 involving local fishing companies and relevant national partners. Information gathered from these engagements is being used to draft ER/EM operational procedures, though completion remains ongoing due to limited staffing and the availability of only one legal counsel within the Ministry.

Implementation remains in progress, but Palau has reported tangible advancements in 2025. The ER training for captains on the use of tablet-based onboard reporting applications is planned once vessels return from docking overseas, while an EM Memorandum of Understanding is being drafted for negotiation with the local fleet. In addition, a request for proposal (RFP) for EM equipment procurement was scheduled for release in November 2025, with bid evaluations in January 2026. Palau has also begun drafting national EM regulations, with the aim of finalization and passage by Q2 2026 and has requested an extension for both the 2023 and 2024 JTF projects due to the revised implementation timeline.

Financially, Palau received USD 45,500 and utilized USD 20,000, leaving a remaining balance intended to support continued development of ER/EM operational procedures and future ER/EM initiatives. Key challenges include the high cost of EM equipment and installation, and limited implementation capacity within the Oceanic Division, which has fewer than five staff managing all offshore fisheries work. The Secretariat continues to follow up with Palau and will update future reports as additional information becomes available.

2024	<b>Palau</b>	<p>Ms. Persis Omelau, Acting Director Bureau of Fisheries Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Environment P.O. Box 117, Koror, Palau, 96940 Email: <a href="mailto:omelaupersis@gmail.com">omelaupersis@gmail.com</a></p> <p>Keith Mesebeluu, Policy Specialist/Acting Chief Email: <a href="mailto:keithmesebeluu@gmail.com">keithmesebeluu@gmail.com</a></p> <p>Mr. Everson Sengebau, EM Officer Observer Email: <a href="mailto:ebs6ya@gmail.com">ebs6ya@gmail.com</a></p>	Supplementing the continued Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring (ER/EM) Program for the Division of Oceanic Fisheries of the Bureau of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Palau’s local fishing company will be compliant with national regulations, WCPFC CMM 2013-05 on Catch and Effort Reporting, CMM 2014-03 on Standards, Specifications and Procedures for WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels, and FFA’s Regional LL EM objectives.</li> <li>2. Identify types of Electronic Monitoring System that are suitable and cost-effective for Palau’s local fishing industry.</li> <li>3. Palau’s local fishing industries have a fully functioning ER/EM system in place.</li> </ol>	53,500.00
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		Ms. Zilah Oiterong, Fisheries Licensing and Revenue Officer Email: <a href="mailto:dirremeang@gmail.com">dirremeang@gmail.com</a>			
<p><b>Status:</b> This Project (2024) complements and builds upon Palau’s earlier 2023 JTF-supported project on Electronic Reporting (ER) and Electronic Monitoring (EM), further advancing the development and implementation of a national ER/EM program for the longline fishery. The project supports compliance with national regulations, WCPFC CMM 2013-05 and CMM 2014-03, and FFA regional longline EM objectives, while identifying cost-effective EM systems suitable for Palau’s local fishing industry and working toward a fully operational ER/EM system. Funds amounting to USD 53,500 were transferred in April 2024, and by mid-July 2024 the Bureau of Fisheries had procured six tablets to support ER application installation and related capacity-building efforts with industry partners.</p> <p>Palau has requested an extension of the project to allow for continued implementation in line with the revised rollout schedule. Recent progress includes scheduling ER training for longline captains on tablet-based reporting systems, drafting an MoU for EM implementation with the local fleet, and preparing an RFP for EM equipment procurement. In parallel, national EM regulations are being drafted with the goal of finalization in due course. While implementation is progressing, limited staffing capacity within the Oceanic Division remains a key constraint. Further updates will be provided as additional information becomes available.</p>					
2024	Samoa	<p><b>Moli Amosa Iakopo</b> Samoa Principal Fisheries Officer- Offshore and Compliance Units Email: <a href="mailto:moli.iakopo@maf.gov.ws">moli.iakopo@maf.gov.ws</a></p> <p><b>Roseti Imo</b> Samoa Fisheries ACEO-MAF Email: <a href="mailto:roseti.imo@maf.gov.ws">roseti.imo@maf.gov.ws</a></p>	Enhancing Capacity and Strengthening Samoa National Observer Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expand the observer program to include certified observers from the public.</li> <li>2. To Identify and train an individual for the role of a debriefer and Develop and implement standardized debriefing procedures.</li> <li>3. Create SOPs for various aspects of observer tasks, ensuring consistency and compliance.</li> <li>4. Formulate a comprehensive emergency action plan to guide observers in crisis situations.</li> </ol>	33,000.00

				5. Develop a Fisheries Observer Policy tailored to Samoa's context and in line with ROP requirements.	
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**Status:** This project which was approved in 2024 which aims to enhance the capacity of the Samoa National Observer Program by expanding the program to include certified public observers, training and appointing debriefers, developing standardized debriefing procedures and SOPs, formulating an Emergency Action Plan, and establishing a Fisheries Observer Policy aligned with Regional Observer Program (ROP) requirements. While Samoa is not yet a member of the Regional Observer Program (ROP), the primary objective remains to support Samoa’s accession and ensure that the Samoa Observer Program is enhanced to meet ROP standards.

Project implementation was delayed due to internal administrative processes within Samoa, which also postponed the initial release of project funds. Once these internal issues were addressed, Samoa requested the transfer of the approved JTF funding, which was subsequently transferred and released to the Samoa’s Government account in August 2025. Since then, Samoa has completed three observer-related activities, with the Awareness Program ongoing through December 2025 and January 2026. Remaining activities are planned but require additional time due to delays in implementation, national procurement requirements, and the need to align observer activities with fishing seasons and weather conditions.

During the FAC19 Meeting in Manila, Philippines on 30 November 2025, Samoa has therefore requested an extension to June 2026 to complete all remaining components. This request was supported by Japan, ensuring full and responsible utilization of the USD 33,000 allocated budget.

2025	<b>Philippines</b>	Suzette Barcoma Email: <a href="mailto:suzettebarcoma@gmail.com">suzettebarcoma@gmail.com</a>	Introduction of Biodegradable Fish Aggregating Devices (BioFADs) Using Bamboo Raft and Abaca Ropes in the Philippines	The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of utilizing natural abaca rope and bamboo raft as biodegradable alternatives for drifting Fish Aggregating Devices (dFADs) in tuna fisheries.	50,000.00
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**Status:** The project on the Introduction of Biodegradable Fish Aggregating Devices (BioFADs) Using Bamboo Raft and Abaca Ropes in the Philippines aims to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of natural abaca rope and bamboo raft as biodegradable alternatives to conventional drifting FADs in tuna fisheries. Project funds were transferred on 28 April 2025, with implementation commencing in July 2025. Initial activities have included continuous coordination with fisherfolk beneficiaries, consultations on deployment areas, procurement of supplies and materials, documentation, and the hiring of laborers, divers, and project staff. While typhoon-related disruptions caused temporary delays, procured materials are now scheduled for delivery and turnover to beneficiaries, with construction to begin in the coming days under supervision to ensure compliance with the approved standard design. Project completion remains targeted for June 2026, with a further update to be provided when it becomes available.

Earlier this year, the Philippines requested a budget realignment, which was supported and approved by Japan. The realignment reallocates funds from Travel, Communication, and Professional Services to Supplies and Materials and Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) to address increased material costs and support the development of information and education campaign (IEC) materials. The adjustment does not require additional funding and maintains the total approved budget of USD 50,000, without affecting the project’s objectives, scope, or timeline.

The BioFADs launching and turnover ceremony was successfully conducted on 26 March 2026 with the fisherfolk beneficiaries from the Subic Commercial Fishing Association Inc. (SCOFAI). Following the ceremony, the deployment of the BioFADs took place on 27 March 2026, at coordinates 14°57'27.36" N, 119°28'14.44" E, located off the west coast of the Philippines, approximately 96.64 kilometers (52.18 nautical miles) from Subic, Zambales. The nearest shoreline coordinates are 14°57'13.70" N, 120°03'32.74" E, with an estimated distance of 63.31 kilometers (34.18 nautical miles) from shore. Following the deployment, monthly monitoring will be conducted.

2025	Fiji	Meli Raicebe Email: <a href="mailto:raicebe.meli@gmail.com">raicebe.meli@gmail.com</a>	Enhancing Fiji’s Fisheries Data Collection and Compliance with WCPFC Conservation and Management Measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To Train and build the technical capacities of Observers and Enforcement officers to effectively monitor and report fishing activities.</li> <li>2. To enhance collaboration between line agencies and the industry to address operational and regulatory challenges.</li> </ol>	24,919.55 <sup>2</sup>
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**Status:** The project “Enhancing Fiji’s Fisheries Data Collection and Compliance with WCPFC Conservation and Management Measures” aims to strengthen Fiji’s fisheries monitoring and compliance capacity by building the technical skills of Observers and Enforcement Officers to effectively monitor and report fishing activities. It also seeks to enhance collaboration between relevant line agencies and the fishing industry to address operational and regulatory challenges and support effective implementation of WCPFC Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs).

Following Fiji's earlier update on the utilization of Funds and noting the end of Fiji's 2024-2025 fiscal year, the funds were transferred back to the initial Commission Account. Fiji has then worked with the Secretariat to have the funds re-sent to back to the initial Government Account and had finally been able to receive the amount in December of 2025.

<sup>2</sup> The total requested budget was USD 39,850.00; due to the shortfall of the JTF budget JTF will finance JTF = USD 24, 919.55 and the remaining balance to the SRF= USD 14,930.45

Noting that the initial timeline for the execution of the project was affected due to the reversal of funds, Fiji have submitted a new projective timeline to reflect the activities that will be undertaken under the project. The funds are currently being held within the Government's initial consolidated account and are awaiting release following the re-assessment of the new timeline.

All planned activities are envisaged to commence in April 2026 and to be fully implemented by 31 July 2026.

**Annex 1. Summary of JTF Work Plan for 2026 (Year 3, Phase 4 Program)**

#	Beneficiary Member(s)	Contacts	Project Title	Objectives	Budget (USD)
1	FSM	<p>Mr. Tosuo Jr. Irons, FSM National Observer Coordinator, NORMA                      Email: <a href="mailto:tosuojr.iron@norma.fm">tosuojr.iron@norma.fm</a>                      Phone:+6919205166</p>	<p>Transitioning FSM Longline Observer Program from Paper-based to Electronic Reporting:                      National Training on OLLO Application</p>	<p>1. To train 10 FSM longline observers in the use of the OLLO application for electronic reporting.                      2. To improve the quality, timeliness, and availability of FSM longline observer data.                      3. To strengthen FSM’s compliance with WCPFC and FFA commitments to implement ER across observer programs.                      4. To enhance the technical skills of FSM’s National Observer Program staff in electronic data collection and transmission.</p>	10,000.00
2	Tonga	<p>Dr. Sione Vailala Matoto, <i>CEO for Fisheries</i>                      Email: <a href="mailto:ceo@tongafish.gov.to">ceo@tongafish.gov.to</a>; <a href="mailto:vailalam@yahoo.com">vailalam@yahoo.com</a></p> <p>Mr. Martin Finau, <i>Head of Fisheries Science Division</i>                      Email: <a href="mailto:martin.finau@tongafish.gov.to">martin.finau@tongafish.gov.to</a></p> <p><b>Ms. Lavinia Vaipuna</b>, <i>Head of Offshore Section</i>                      Email: <a href="mailto:lavinia.vaipuna@tongafish.gov.to">lavinia.vaipuna@tongafish.gov.to</a>; <a href="mailto:nia.vaipuna@gmail.com">nia.vaipuna@gmail.com</a></p>	<p>Reinforce robust data collection and evidence-based management of Tonga’s tuna and tuna artisanal fisheries, enabling timely monitoring and feedback that contribute to sustainable conservation practices, food security, and economic resilience.</p>	<p>To ensure Tonga continues to collect, process, and utilize high-quality tuna data from longline fleets while also strengthening artisanal tuna data collection through improved monitoring systems, broader adoption of e-Reporting, and enhanced capacity development for fisheries staff, vessel operators and data monitors across the all-Tonga’s island groups.</p>	44,725.00

3	SPG <sup>3</sup>	<p>Mr Siola'a Malimali (<a href="mailto:s.malimali@tongafish.gov.to">s.malimali@tongafish.gov.to</a>) and Mr Lars Olsen (<a href="mailto:olsenpacific@gmail.com">olsenpacific@gmail.com</a>)</p>	<p>Implementation of Electronic Reporting in SPG's longline fishery to facilitate implementing the South Pacific Albacore Management Procedure adopted at WCFC22.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To purchase rugged tablets to be configured with the SPC OnBoard application for electronic reporting of longline log sheets.</li> <li>2. To conduct a train the trainer refresher of the OnBoard system in each SPG country, focusing on key fisheries staff and industry stakeholders (i.e. vessel captains).</li> <li>3. To ensure all tablets are included in national asset registers to be managed under existing government procurement, ICT, and asset-management frameworks.</li> </ol>	54,898.93
4	Tonga	<p>Dr Sione Vailala Matoto Head, Ministry of Fisheries Email: <a href="mailto:vailalam@yahoo.com">vailalam@yahoo.com</a></p> <p>Mele Átuekaho Head, Compliance Division Email: <a href="mailto:meletoaatuekaho@gmail.com">meletoaatuekaho@gmail.com</a></p> <p>Losaline Otukolo Head of Enforcement Email: <a href="mailto:losilini@gmail.com">losilini@gmail.com</a></p>	<p>Strengthening and Modernizing Port State Measures Implementation in Tonga through Electronic Systems, Enhanced Information Exchange, and Inter-Agency Capacity Building</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthen national capacity for PSMA implementation and port inspection coverage through officer incentives and the recruitment of one support staff member.</li> <li>2. Improve information exchange and reporting through effective use of GIES and standardized national inspection tools.</li> <li>3. Enhance inter-agency coordination and institutional procedures through SOP</li> </ol>	20,895.00

<sup>3</sup> South Pacific Group (Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Samoa, Tonga)

				development and awareness activities. 4. Build technical capacity and regional engagement through officer training and participation in TWG and WCPFC forums.	
5	Tonga	Dr Sione Vailala Matoto, CEO for Fisheries Email: <a href="mailto:vailalam@yahoo.com">vailalam@yahoo.com</a>  Mele To'a 'Atuekaho, Deputy CEO, Compliance Division Email: <a href="mailto:meletoaatuekaho@gmail.com">meletoaatuekaho@gmail.com</a>  Kalo Manuopangai Observer Coordinator Email: <a href="mailto:kmanuopangai@gmail.com">kmanuopangai@gmail.com</a>	Capacity building in, and strengthening of, Tonga national observer programme & to conduct Purse Seine Training for Tonga Observer Programme 2026	This project seeks to strengthen Tonga's national observer programme by: 1. Conducting 3-week (15 working days) Purse Seine Training for 15 existing observers. 2. Providing essential materials such as calipers for observers to conduct their duties.	25,975.00
	<b>Sub-total</b>			<b>Sum of project budget requested</b>	156,493.93
	WCPFC Administrative fee	Aaron Nighswander <a href="mailto:aaron.nighswander@wcpfc.int">aaron.nighswander@wcpfc.int</a>	7.5% administrative fee	Overhead	10,881.15
	<b>JTF 2026</b>				145,082.00
	Balance/Deficit (2026 JTF - ALL Proposals - Admin Fee)			<b>Total JTF for 2026</b>	<b>(22,293.08)<sup>4</sup></b>

<sup>4</sup> Consideration of the remaining Japan Trust Fund from 2025 of around USD 26,389 ([FAC19-2025-03: Report on the Status of Other Funds for 2025](#)) to address the budget shortfall in 2026.



## Annex 2. Brief Reports of Completed JTF Project/s in 2025

**Project #2 (2025): Support and maintain high level data collection and to improve management of tuna fisheries in Tonga, as well as providing timely feedback through monitoring programs on conservation of tuna Species (Port Sampling)**

### A. Project Objectives

1. To fund tuna data collection (port sampling) over one full calendar year (2025) in Tonga.
2. To fund artisanal tuna data collection over one full calendar year (2025) in Tonga.
3. To empower staff capacity to enable collection of data and enter it into the database.
4. To conduct E-Reporting training for all new tuna vessel masters, port samplers, and artisanal data officers.
5. That the excess amount from each month (when the estimated number of vessels not reach the target which means less than 20 unloading duties on tuna vessels per month) will be available to improve management and provide awareness of data collection.
6. To enhance the capacity of fisheries personnel on data management and reporting by attending the annual Tuna Data Workshop at Nadi, Fiji.

### B. Results and Discussions

This report presents the key achievements and outcomes of Project #2 (2025), funded under the JTF programme, which aimed to strengthen tuna fisheries data collection and management in Tonga.

Throughout 2025, the project significantly enhanced tuna port sampling and artisanal data collection coverage nationwide. It maintained 100% logsheet coverage for industrial vessels, expanded artisanal data collection to all island groups, strengthened staff capacity through targeted training, and sustained electronic reporting systems.

Despite challenges such as staff turnover, outdated electronic devices, and the integration of new vessels into the reporting system, the project successfully met its core objectives and contributed meaningfully to improved fisheries monitoring, compliance, and evidence-based management.

#### Key Results and Achievements:

##### Port Sampling Programme Fishing

##### Fleet Overview (2025):

- 4 domestic tuna vessels
- 7 foreign fishing vessels operating in Tonga's waters

##### Logsheet Coverage:

- Maintained 100% logsheet coverage throughout 2025, ensuring complete documentation of industrial tuna fishing activities.

##### Port Sampling:

- 125 fishing trips monitored.
- Port sampling sessions conducted for all applicable unloading events.

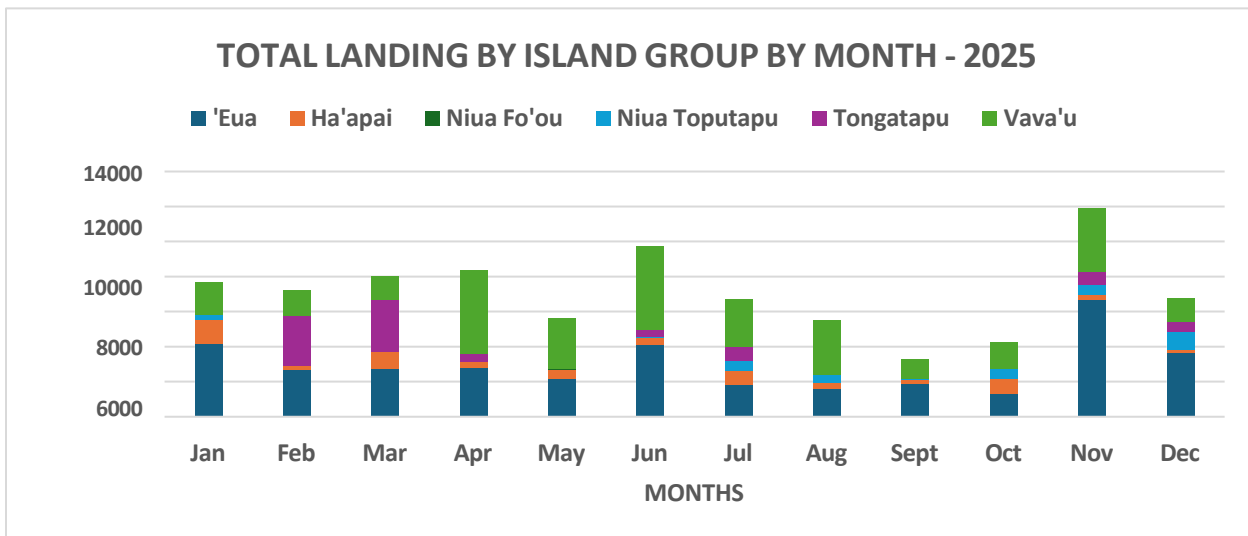
This level of coverage ensures reliable catch and effort data, supporting stock assessment and compliance monitoring.

**Tuna Artisanal data collection:**

- The project expanded artisanal tuna data collection to all island groups of Tonga, strengthening national coverage and improving understanding of small-scale fisheries contributions.
- Total Logsheets Collected (2025): 816  
This represents a **24% increase compared to 2024.**

Island groups	No. of Submissions
Eua	476
Ha'apai	45
Niuafo'ou	3
Niua Toputapu	40
Tongatapu	46
Vava'u	206
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>816</b>

The increase demonstrates improved engagement with artisanal fishers and strengthened data reporting systems at the community level.



## Staff Capacity Building:

### Daily paid Data Monitors hired in time to time:

- Five daily-paid data monitors were engaged at USD 25.00 per day.
- Deployed across Tongatapu, Vava’u, Ha’apai, and ‘Eua to ensure localized and continuous coverage.
- Additional funding was secured by the Ministry to support officers in the two Niuas, further strengthening outer island coverage.

## Data Responsibilities

Data monitors collected:

- Tuna catch data
- Fishing effort information
- Species composition
- Other relevant biological and operational parameters

Their contribution significantly enhanced artisanal tuna data availability and accuracy.

## Electronic Reporting (E-Reporting)

The project maintained and strengthened electronic reporting systems throughout 2025, improving efficiency, timeliness, and data accuracy.

### Logsheets by Reporting System (2025)

E-Reporting Apps	System Source	
	ER	Manual
Onboard	95	30
Onshore	186	29
TAILS	547	269
Olo	24	16
Totals	852	344

## Training Conducted

- TAILS refresher training conducted in Tongatapu (September 2025).
- Onshore and Onboard application refresher training for port samplers (October 2025).
- Continuous onboard training provided to new vessel masters and data officers.

## Regional Engagement and Capacity Development

The 19<sup>th</sup> Tuna Data Workshop was held in Nadi, Fiji (31 April 2025). However, project funds were received in May 2025, after the scheduled workshop.

With Japan’s approval, funds were redirected to support Tonga’s participation in the 21st WCPFC

Commission Meeting held in Manila in November 2025. Participation ensured continued regional engagement and strengthened Tonga’s representation in tuna fisheries management discussions under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.

**Challenges Encounter:**

- **Staff Turnover**  
Frequent turnover required repeated onboarding and refresher training for port samplers, data monitors, and vessel captains.
- **Tablet Compatibility Issues**  
Some tablets used for electronic reporting became outdated and incompatible with updated applications, affecting reporting efficiency.
- **New Vessel Integration**  
The entry of new vessels into Tonga’s waters required additional system setup and training to ensure compliance with reporting requirements.

Despite these challenges, implementation continued with minimal disruption.

**Way forward**

To sustain and build upon the 2025 achievements, the following actions are recommended:

- **Continued Investment in Training**  
Regular refresher training on electronic reporting and data collection methodologies to maintain high standards.
- **Upgrade of Electronic Devices**  
Replacement of outdated tablets to ensure compatibility with reporting applications.
- **Strengthening Data-Driven Decision Making**  
Greater utilization of electronic data outputs for management decisions, policy development, and reporting to regional bodies.
- **Enhanced Stakeholder Engagement**  
Ongoing awareness with fishers and vessel operators to ensure compliance and accurate reporting.

**C. Budget**

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	44,279.00
Funds Utilized	Port Sampling Fees: USD10,110.00 Daily data Monitors wages, Capacity building Training: Electronic Training: USD32,125.00 Participation in the 20 <sup>th</sup> WCPFC Commission Meeting: USD2,044.00  Total utilized: USD44,279.00

In-Kind Contribution <i>(if any)</i>	Vehicle Tablets for e- Reporting, Trainers Facility
Other Funding Source/s <i>(if any)</i>	

**D. Fund Balance**

The project funds were fully utilized (please refer to the above table).

**E. Overall Assessment**

The project successfully attained its expected outcomes in 2025. It maintained full industrial logsheet coverage, expanded artisanal data collection nationwide, strengthened staff capacity, improved electronic reporting systems, and enhanced regional engagement.

The outcomes achieved under this project have substantially strengthened Tonga’s tuna fisheries monitoring framework and contribute directly to sustainable tuna resource management.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the **Japanese Trust Fund (JTF)** for their unwavering support throughout 2025. Their funding has been pivotal in ensuring the continuation and expansion of tuna data collection activities in Tonga. The project’s success highlights the importance of sustained collaboration, and we look forward to further strengthening this partnership in the coming years.

We recommend continuing focus on training, upgrading electronic tools, and engaging stakeholders to further enhance sustainable fisheries management. Furthermore, addressing challenges related to staff turnover and technological updates will ensure the project remains effective and efficient.

## TAILS Data Collection

Ha'apai Island



Fishing Vessel from 'Eua island selling his catch in Tongatapu



**Project #3 (2025): Capacity building in, and strengthening of, Tonga national observer programme & to conduct Basic Observer Longline Training for Tonga Observer Programme 2025**

**A. Project Objectives**

This project seeks to strengthen Tonga's national observer programme by:

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 in order to keep observers on the job.
3. Conduct 3 weeks (15 working days) Longline Observer Training for new observer recruitment.

**B. Results and Discussions**

This report presents its achievements and outcomes of Project#2 (2025) funded by Japan Trust Fund (JTF) which aimed to strengthen Tonga's national observer programme.

SPC together with Tonga Fisheries conducted a three weeks observer training started Monday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2025 to Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2025. There were 10 observers trained and certified as authorized observers and are now deployed on Local and Foreign LL vessels. There were also five observers that were at port at the moment, participated in this training as a refresher for them.

A one week, in country Tufman 2 training was conducted by senior observers and introduce OLLO and using of Tufman 2 to new recruited observers. There was also virtual meeting with SPC when needed of their assistance in regards to upgrading skills of existing observers. All 2025 observer data have been debriefed and entered into Tufman 2. Tonga is now seeking funds to purchase ten tablets for new observers.





**C. Budget**

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	\$25,625.00
Funds Utilized	\$12,800 - upgrading skills on Tufman 2 and data entry \$ 12,825 – LL observer training  <b>Total utilized - \$25,625.00</b>
In-Kind Contribution ( <i>if any</i> )	Vehicles Fuel Tablets
Other Funding Source/s ( <i>if any</i> )	

**D. Fund Balance**

The project funds were fully utilized (please refer to the above table).

**E. Comments/Conclusions/Feedback/Suggestions/Recommendations**

The project successfully attained its expected outcomes in 2025. We recruited ten new observers to board on Local and Foreign Fishing Longline Vessels, upgrade skills of existing observers on Tufman 2 and introduce OLLO and Tufman 2 to new observers.

Tonga Observer programme would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the Japan Trust Fund for your continuous support throughout the past few years and also 2025. We are looking forward for another successful proposal this year 2026.

## **Project #1 (2019, Phase 3 Program): Development of National Competent Authority [HACCP strategy] for Cook Islands Offshore Fisheries**

### **A. Overview**

Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) is a system that was developed for assuring pathogen-free foods. The Cook Islands have made significant legislative changes in recent years to meet competent authority requirements. With significant changes being made to fisheries management frameworks and demands for responsible fishing nations to implement complementary Competent Authority (CA) regimes, it is timely that the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) undertakes an exercise to review its CA capabilities and determine how effective and responsive they are to meet the needs of its regulatory framework.

A review of all relevant legislation and policies, documenting CA needs and gaps – in accordance with international, regional and national law – comparing current CA programs and their effectiveness in response to management needs is required.

### **B. Objectives**

To support a comprehensive review of MMR's Competent Authority programmes to ensure that current systems respond to the needs of MMR's fisheries management framework.

### **C. Results and Discussions**

The Cook Islands successfully completed the project to review and strengthen the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) offshore fisheries Competent Authority (CA) programs, ensuring improved alignment with national, regional, and international requirements. Key outcomes included progress toward formalizing CA functions through strengthened institutional arrangements such as with the Ministry of Health, development of a national HACCP strategy and implementation plan, and advancement of supporting regulatory tools such as standards, policies, and compliance checklists. This work has now provided the ability for future work to be developed to enable the scalable application of CA requirements to particular fleets to meet market state requirements.

Stakeholder engagement activities, awareness initiatives, and officer training were undertaken to strengthen understanding and application of CA requirements. Inspections and practical capacity-building efforts also contributed to improving readiness for HACCP-based compliance and enforcement. Two staff members lead CA work and are now training subordinates until formal training is available through regional organizations.

Although implementation experienced challenges and delays particularly due to COVID-19 impacts and staffing constraints, the project was finalized with support from external consultants and technical assistance partners, including FFA. The Cook Islands informed the JTF Steering Committee in August 2025 that all planned activities were delivered and project funds were fully utilized, strengthening the country's CA framework to better meet offshore fisheries management and market access needs.

**D. Budget and Fund Balance**

<b>Details</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Funds Received	USD 74,500 (NZD 94,406)
Funds Utilized	USD 74,500
In-Kind Contribution <i>(if any)</i>	
Other Funding Source/s <i>(if any)</i>	

**E. Fund Balance *(if any, after the project has been completed)***

The funds were fully utilized.

**F. Comments/Conclusions/Feedbacks/Suggestions/Recommendations**

The Cook Islands expresses its appreciation to the Government of Japan for its generous support through the Japan Trust Fund, which enabled the successful completion of this project. This assistance has strengthened the Ministry of Marine Resources' offshore fisheries Competent Authority systems, including progress in HACCP-related frameworks, regulatory tools, and capacity-building activities.

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

### **A. Overview**

As part of its capacity building and succession planning initiatives, Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) will be implementing a series of training sessions to engage and prepare staff to participate in regional fisheries meetings. This proposal complements other initiatives MMR is undertaking to support professional development, including working with other Ministries training programs such as diplomatic protocols and negotiation, to ensure staff is adequately trained before venturing into international meetings to represent the Cook Islands.

The Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) was granted project funds in 2019 for the **Improving the participation and engagement in international fisheries forums project**.

MMR is the lead agency for the management of marine resources in the Cook Islands. This includes representation in several regional fisheries management organisations (RFMO) in the Pacific.

The project is focused on the Pacific region and the legal instruments, governance, procedures and protocols, and structure of RFOs and RFMOs that feed into the work of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

MMR's approach was to divide the project into two components:

- a) creation of the training model and materials and subsequently
- b) delivery of training by either electronic means or if the situation allows, through the preferred face-to-face delivery mode.

During 2020 and 2021, the international border closures due to COVID-19 prevented the project from being completed by an expert to create training content and then deliver it to cohorts of trainees.

Through the government procurement process, an expert was identified to develop the training materials. A training manual of nine modules was created backed up by a series of PowerPoint presentations, video clips, and selected reading materials. A quiz was positioned at the end of each module to test the trainee's understanding of the subject material.

The training was carried out for two cohorts of trainees over two weeks in December 2022. The training was not accredited, and participants did not have their quiz papers scored separately. Professor Chris Wold of the International Environmental Law Project, Lewis and Clark Law School, Oregon, United States developed the training materials in consultation with MMR and then delivered the training in person.

In December 2022, the Cook Islands reported that core project activities had been completed, including the development of a 9-module training manual, study guides, quizzes, PowerPoint presentations, and supplementary reading materials. Training was delivered in-person to two

cohorts during a single expert-led visit to Rarotonga. While successful, some elements were delivered at a reduced capacity due to travel and availability constraints.

Savings of approximately NZD 22,515 from the original NZD 92,406 budget were requested to be redirected towards updating and digitizing the materials, including production of training videos. The proposal was approved by Japan and formally endorsed by the Committee.

During the August 2023 Steering Committee, it was reported that the project remained ongoing under the approved extension until December 2023.

Following this, the project lead retired in late 2023, creating recruitment challenges and delaying progress. Some training materials required updating, and the production of training videos—covering the nine modules has been progressed and completed.

Japan acknowledged the challenges faced and emphasized the importance of regular progress updates, particularly regarding changes to the project timeline.

## **B. Objectives**

1. To develop the professional capacity of MMR staff, and related agencies, to ensure the effective participation of the Cook Islands in international fisheries meetings, in particular the WCPFC.
2. To utilize and enhance the existing training material to continue to provide the training to more Cook Islands participants. The enhanced training course will be made available in self-paced learning mode via an online platform.
3. To utilize and enhance the existing training material to continue to provide the training to more Cook Islands participants. The enhanced training course will be made available in self-paced learning mode via an online platform.

## **C. Project Results**

The Cook Islands has successfully completed the Improving Participation and Engagement in International Fisheries Forums project, strengthening the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) and relevant agencies to engage more effectively in regional and international fisheries governance processes, particularly within the WCPFC framework. The project delivered a comprehensive training package focused on the Pacific regional fisheries landscape, including key legal instruments, governance structures, procedural engagement, and decision-making processes across regional fisheries organizations. A detailed training manual consisting of nine modules was developed and supported by PowerPoint presentations, video clips, selected reading materials, and quizzes to assess participant understanding. Training was delivered in-person in Rarotonga in December 2022 to two cohorts, led by Professor Chris Wold (International Environmental Law Project, Lewis and Clark Law School, USA), in consultation with MMR.

While project implementation has faced challenges and delays due to COVID-19 border

closures and later affected by staffing constraints and the retirement of the project lead in late 2023, MMR was able to complete all remaining activities under the approved project extension. This included updating and enhancing the original training materials and producing video content for all nine modules, using redirected project savings approved by Japan. An additional module on BBNJ was also developed to enhance the overall course content. The final outcome is a strengthened and modernized training program that can be delivered in a self-paced online format throughout the year, ensuring long-term accessibility for new and existing Cook Islands participants. This sustainable resource supports professional development, succession planning, and improved preparedness for Cook Islands representatives attending international fisheries forums and contributing to decision-making processes within WCPFC and other Pacific regional fisheries management settings.

MMR plans to make these modules available via its website once its redevelopment is completed in 2026. Through other project funding, MMR intends to organize another face-to-face training course during 2026 in the Cook Islands, using the now updated modules.

**D. Budget and Fund Balance**

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	USD 62,886.10 <sup>5</sup>
Funds Utilized	USD 62,886.10
In-Kind Contribution <i>(if any)</i>	
Other Funding Source/s <i>(if any)</i>	

**E. Fund Balance *(if any, after the project has been completed)***

The funds were fully utilized.

**F. Comments/Conclusions/Feedbacks/Suggestions/Recommendations**

The Cook Islands sincerely thanks the Government of Japan for its generous support through the Japan Trust Fund, which enabled the successful completion of this project. Japan’s assistance has strengthened the capacity of the Ministry of Marine Resources to effectively engage in regional and international fisheries forums, including the WCPFC, through the development, delivery, and digitization of a comprehensive training programme. The Cook Islands greatly values Japan’s continued partnership in supporting sustainable fisheries governance in the Pacific region.

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<sup>5</sup> Total funding required to support this project is USD 64,444.00. USD 62,886.10 is available within the JTF 2019 Budget, the shortfall amounting to USD 1,557.90 is provided from unspent JTF carried over from the First Phase of the JTF.

### Annex 3. Solomon Islands Completed Projects Related to Electronic Monitoring (EM) Funded Under the Japan Trust Fund

1) **Project #2 (2023): Training of Solomon Islands Fisheries Compliance Officers in Honiara and Noro on the use of Fisheries Information Management System (FIMS) Compliance Module to create, record and manage non-compliance cases and incidences electronically and the training of the Industries Officers and the Fishing Vessels Captains on the use of iFIMs new eForms (Transshipment and Unloading) to record, send and manage catch data electronically.**

#### A. Project Objectives

1. To train our Compliance Officers on the FIMS Compliance module to;
  - Receive GEN 3 reports from the Observers
  - Create new Incidences based on GEN 3 reports
  - Create new Cases based on Incidences created from GEN 3 reports from Observers
  - Update cases, upload documents and evidence to the Cases management module in FIMS
  - Change cases status based on the progresses, depending on the progress of the case, either, start investigation, start interviewing, court hearing, or fined and settled and complete
  
2. To train the Fishing Companies on how to use the FIMS Transshipment and the Unloading modules to record, report and manage catch data as well as viewing status of cases in FIMS.

#### B. Results and Discussions

The final training activity of the project was successfully conducted from 20–21 and 26–27 August 2025 at the MFMR ERM Conference Room. The four-day PNA FIMS and IFIMS training brought together approximately 40 staff from five sections of the Offshore Division, equipping them with practical knowledge of key FIMS and IFIMS modules, including electronic reporting, licensing, observer management, compliance, transshipment, and CDS functions.

As a result, all Offshore MCS officers now have improved access to and competency in using the FIMS system to record, verify, and manage MCS data effectively. New user credentials were issued, forgotten logins were recovered, and additional module access was granted, strengthening overall compliance monitoring and data management processes. This final activity represents a significant and sustainable capacity-building outcome under the JTF initiative. Please refer to **Attachment A** for more details of this activity.

#### C. Budget

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	USD 34,965.00

Funds Utilized	USD 34,965.00
In-Kind Contribution <i>(if any)</i>	
Other Funding Source/s <i>(if any)</i>	

**D. Fund Balance**

The funds were fully utilized, and project activities were completed.

**E. Comments/Conclusions/Feedback/Suggestions/Recommendations**

On behalf of Solomon Islands, we extend our sincere appreciation to the Government of Japan through the Japan Trust Fund (JTF) and WCPFC for the support provided towards strengthening our national fisheries monitoring and compliance capacity. The JTF-funded PNA FIMS and IFIMS training has greatly enhanced the capability of our Offshore MCS officers to effectively utilize electronic reporting and information management systems to support compliance and decision-making. Solomon Islands values this important partnership and looks forward to continued collaboration in strengthening sustainable fisheries management in the region.

**2) Project #3 (2023): Training of the Longline Fishing Companies Technical people on the basic Electronic Monitoring (EM) Systems troubleshooting processes and support to the Ministry's technical officers to travel down to Noro port to fix failed EM systems.**

**A. Project Objectives**

1. To train the Fishing companies technical officers on how to:
  - Inspect and check for hardware and software faults and errors
  - Remove and replace full hard drives in port when vessels arrive back in port
  - Shut down and start EM systems to try and hard reset EM systems
  - Reset systems by pressing the reset button
  - Check to see if dates and positional data are up to date
  - Report faults and errors to the Ministry and plan for EM team to travel down to Noro to fix any serious faults and errors
  
2. To travel to Noro this year 2023, 2024 and 2025 to fix hardware and software faults; the faults to be fix when traveling to Noro include but not limited to:
  - Fix fault hardware
  - Remove and replace hardware spare parts including; cameras, antennas, cables, screen/server and UPS
  - Install software upgrades
  - Install updates

**B. Results and Discussions**

With support from the Japan Trust Fund (JTF), Solomon Islands implemented a targeted capacity-building initiative to strengthen the operation and maintenance of Electronic Monitoring (EM) systems on longline vessels. The project focused on training technical officers from longline fishing companies on basic EM troubleshooting procedures, including identifying hardware and software faults, replacing hard drives in port, restarting and resetting EM systems, verifying date and positional data updates, and reporting faults to the Ministry for follow-up action. This training has improved industry-level technical readiness and strengthened coordination between fishing companies and the Ministry in addressing EM system issues.

In addition, the project supported Ministry technical officers to conduct regular technical support missions to Noro port to repair failed EM systems and address more serious faults. These missions include replacing spare parts such as cameras, antennas, cables, servers, screens, and UPS units, as well as installing software upgrades and updates. Solomon Islands successfully conducted an onsite technical support training in Noro in November 2023 and completed a technical support trip on 20 January 2024. Remaining project funds were allocated to support final onsite technical support missions scheduled last August and September 2025.

**C. Budget**

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	USD 24,675.00
Funds Utilized	USD 24,675.00
In-Kind Contribution <i>(if any)</i>	
Other Funding Source/s <i>(if any)</i>	

**D. Fund Balance**

The funds were fully utilized, and project activities were completed.

**E. Comments/Conclusions/Feedback/Suggestions/Recommendations**

On behalf of Solomon Islands, we sincerely thank the Government of Japan through the Japan Trust Fund (JTF) and WCPFC for the continued support provided under this project. This assistance has strengthened our national Electronic Monitoring (EM) program by building the technical capacity of longline fishing companies to troubleshoot EM systems and supporting MFMR technical officers to conduct onsite maintenance and repairs in Noro. These efforts have improved system reliability and strengthened compliance monitoring, contributing directly to more effective fisheries management in Solomon Islands.

### 3) Project #2 (2022): Support to Solomon Islands National Electronic Monitoring (EM) Policy Consultations, Drafting and Launching

#### A. Project Objective

To provide financial support for Solomon Islands National Longline EM Policy Internal and external Consultations with the Industries and stakeholders.

#### B. Results and Discussions

With the support of the Japan Trust Fund (JTF), Solomon Islands has made significant progress in the development of its National Longline Electronic Monitoring (EM) Policy, aimed at strengthening the monitoring of longline fishing vessel activities. Recognizing the challenges associated with effectively monitoring longline operations, the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) has advanced EM as a strategic tool to improve data verification, validation of logbook information, and overall compliance with conservation and management measures (CMMs). The EM will provide independent and complementary data to existing monitoring tools, including the Regional Observer Programme (ROP), and will contribute to broader regional fisheries management efforts, including harvest strategy development within WCPFC.

Under the project, Solomon Islands successfully completed internal consultations within MFMR and external consultations with industry stakeholders, resulting in a draft EM Policy. The draft was reviewed by SPC and FFA, subsequently refined, and presented to Executive Management for feedback. A clean, updated version has been submitted for final confirmation prior to the last round of industry consultations. The EM Policy (**Attachment B**) has now been finalized and the official launch scheduled to take place in March 2026.

#### C. Budget

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	USD 48,247.50
Funds Utilized	USD 48,247.50
In-Kind Contribution <i>(if any)</i>	
Other Funding Source/s <i>(if any)</i>	

#### D. Fund Balance

The project funds were fully utilized

#### E. Comments/Conclusions/Feedback/Suggestions/Recommendations

On behalf of Solomon Islands, we sincerely thank the Government of Japan through the Japan Trust Fund (JTF) and WCPFC for supporting the development of our National Longline Electronic Monitoring (EM) Policy. With this support, MFMR successfully completed internal and external consultations, finalized the draft policy following reviews by SPC, FFA,

and Executive Management, and officially launched the EM Policy in November 2025. This milestone strengthens Solomon Islands' fisheries monitoring, compliance, and sustainable management framework, and we deeply appreciate JTF's instrumental contribution to this achievement.