

PACIFIC ISLANDS – REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR SHARKS

The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), in a collaborative effort on behalf of their members, are developing a Pacific Islands – Regional Plan of Action for Sharks (PI-RPOA).

The PI-RPOA will provide Pacific Island Countries & Territories with a framework for considering and developing management arrangements for shark species that address regional management obligations. The above-mentioned regional organisations are seeking a consultant with experience in shark management and/or research to develop the PI-RPOA in collaboration with focal points from each agency. The full details of the consultancy are attached in the terms of reference.

Applications to undertake the consultancy should address the terms of reference and include a CV.

Applications should be lodged to Mr Steve Shanks via e-mail at steve.shanks@ffa.int before close of business on 27 March 2009.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A CONSULTANCY TO DEVELOP A PACIFIC ISLANDS REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION (PI-RPOA) ON SHARKS

Background

At the Third Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC3) in Apia, Samoa in December 2006 a Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) for sharks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) was adopted. This measure was subsequently revised at WCPFC5 in Busan, Korea, in December 2008. The Shark CMM has two parts, the first being a non-binding resolution and the second being binding upon Commission members, Cooperating non-members and participating territories (CCMs).

The non-binding part of the Shark CMM resolves that the ‘International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks’ (IPOA – Sharks), developed by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), should be implemented by CCMs. The intent of the IPOA – Sharks is to carry out an initial assessment of shark stocks under the jurisdiction of the State to determine if there is a need for national management action to monitor and mitigate the impacts of fisheries on sharks. It is generally accepted that where shark populations may be negatively impacted as a result of fishing activities a National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (NPOA – Sharks) should be developed. The IPOA – Sharks suggests the kind of assessment necessary to determine whether an NPOA – Sharks is required, considering the status of stocks (if known) and the effectiveness of any management arrangements that may be in place. An NPOA – Sharks provides for further monitoring and assessment of fishing impacts on sharks and details the implementation of management arrangements. The Commission should be informed of the implementation of the IPOA – Sharks by CCMs, including their assessment of the need for and/or status of any NPOA – Sharks.

The primary intent of the binding part of the Shark CMM is to prevent ‘shark finning’, i.e. ‘the removal of shark fins at sea and the discarding of the carcass’. The preventative measure applied is to require that the total weight of the fins cannot exceed more than 5% of the total weight of the shark carcasses aboard the vessel. By attempting to minimize resource wastage and incidental fishing mortality through the discarding of shark carcasses, it is intended that overfishing of shark stocks be prevented.

Purpose of the Pacific Island Regional Plan of Action on Sharks (PI-RPOA Sharks)

The purpose of developing a Pacific Islands Regional Plan of Action on Sharks (PI-RPOA Sharks) is to enable Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTS) to address the obligations arising under the Shark CMM by identifying and enacting compatible measures for waters under their jurisdiction. The PI-RPOA also follows from a decision by the SPREP Council to include sharks in its marine species programme and to collaborate with SPC, FFA, and WCPFC on a regional action plan.

The PI-RPOA Sharks will provide a model NPOA developed specifically for the Pacific Islands region, including a range of monitoring, assessment and management arrangements. These may then be incorporated into a NPOA – Sharks and associated legislation as required by the PICT concerned.

The primary obligation under the Shark CMM at this stage is the application of the 5% fin to carcass ratio. However, paragraph 11 of the Shark CMM provides PICTS with the option to adopt alternative management measures to prevent the overfishing of sharks.

As such, it is intended that the PI-RPOA and subsequent NPOAs will provide PICTS with a range of potential management actions, under broader themes and focus areas, that PICTs may prioritise at both national and regional levels. By developing the PI-RPOA in this way it is anticipated that consistent management arrangements for sharks may be adopted, which will assist with implementation and compliance measures, as well as any future assessment of effectiveness.

Science needs

The WCPFC Scientific Committee (SC) identified the need for a Shark Research Programme (SRP) to improve knowledge and provide assessments for sharks caught in western and central Pacific fisheries. The SRP has yet to receive funding but another WCPFC project on ‘Ecological Risk Assessment’ (ERA), which covers all non-target associated and dependent species (NTADS), has started to integrate information on biological parameters, catches and other indicators of fishing impacts on sharks. The WCPFC Regional Observer Programme (ROP) will also be essential to the effective monitoring and management of fishing impacts on sharks, as will the ongoing national observer programmes.

The recently revised Shark CMM now sets timelines for the future assessment of key shark species, with preliminary advice on stock status of key shark species expected in 2010 in addition to the proposed SRP. CCMs are expected to review the implementation and effectiveness of the Shark CMM and any related management arrangements developed by coastal states, which would include the PI-RPOA Sharks. While it may be difficult to determine the effectiveness of management arrangements in the absence of stock status information, this should not preclude the application of such arrangements by Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) or by the WCPFC based on the ‘precautionary principle’. Fishing gear configurations, indicative catches, survivorship of sharks caught and the fin to carcass ratio of landed sharks may all be monitored as indicators of fishing impacts on sharks.

Objective

To draft a Pacific Islands Regional Plan of Action (PI-RPOA) on Sharks reflecting and promoting best practice in the conservation and management of sharks in the WCPO, and enabling Pacific Island Countries and Territories to develop NPOA – Sharks compatible with the WCPFC Shark CMM.

Scope of the Consultancy

In collaboration with focal points from regional agencies (FFA, SPC, SPREP, WCPFC):

- a) To provide an overview of regional and national measures in place to conserve and manage shark stocks in the WCPO, including a review of any NPOAs developed by WCPFC CCMs and of existing regional action plans for other marine species.
- b) To provide advice in relation to cost effective management options to prevent overfishing of shark stocks on a regional and national basis where possible (i.e. as potential alternatives to the fin to carcass ratio).
- c) To assess the effectiveness of these measures from multiple perspectives, i.e. sustainability of stocks, utilization of product, compliance with regulations, etc.
- d) To provide advice on ways to minimize the incidental mortality of sharks in WCPO tuna fisheries, through avoiding capture and increasing survivorship of captured sharks.
- e) To provide advice on mechanisms for effectively applying the 5% fin to carcass ratio through compliance and monitoring measures, as defined in the Shark CMM.
- f) To provide advice on mechanisms for promoting the full utilization of sharks that are caught and retained, including from the point of transshipment or first landing.
- g) To provide advice on shark species identification and data collection, including fin to carcass ratios of landed catches, for the purpose of improving fisheries monitoring and assessment.
- h) To provide advice on the feasibility of stock assessment for sharks (incorporating a review of catch data, biological data and potential indicators of abundance) and on interim indicators for fishing impacts on sharks.
- i) To develop a framework for NPOA – Sharks that individual Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) could adopt, consistent with the following aims:
 - To ensure that shark catches from directed and non-directed fisheries are sustainable
 - To assess threats to shark populations, determine and protect critical habitats and implement harvest strategies that ensure biological sustainability and rational long-term economic use
 - To identify, and provide special attention to, vulnerable and threatened shark stocks
 - To improve or develop frameworks for effective consultation involving all stakeholders in research, management and educational initiatives within, and between, States
 - To contribute to the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem structure and function
 - To minimize incidental catches of sharks while targeting other species, e.g. tuna, swordfish.
 - To minimize incidental mortality, waste and discards from sharks that are caught, as per the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the WCPFC Convention and CMMs.

- To provide for capacity building in fisheries monitoring, data collection and management, and awareness training in the conservation of sharks as vulnerable marine species.
- To identify the roles of and promote collaboration among regional agencies and PICTS to deliver efficient and sustainable outcomes in the conservation and management of sharks.

Work to be undertaken by the consultant, including time schedule and reporting requirements

The consultant shall:

May 2009

- Gather information on NPOA – Sharks implemented by WCPFC CCMs and on existing regional action plans for other marine species.
- Produce an outline for a PI-RPOA Sharks, reflecting the Objective and Scope defined above.

July 2009

- Meet with focal points from FFA, SPC, SPREP and WCPFC, to discuss the outline and potential contents of the PI-RPOA Sharks (potentially at SPC in New Caledonia).
- Visit SPC in New Caledonia, to gather data, information and advice on fisheries monitoring (i.e. shark species identification, catch reporting, etc.) and options for scientific analysis, including catch estimation, the feasibility of shark stock assessment and interim indicators of fishing impacts.

September 2009

- Produce a draft PI-RPOA Sharks for review by focal points from SPC, WCPFC, SPREP and FFA.
- Receive and incorporate comments on the draft PI-RPOA Sharks as directed from the focal points.

October 2009

- Attend a secondary meeting with the formal contacts if required.
- Prepare a final draft of the PI-RPOA Sharks document for presentation by the focal points to FFC, SPREP Governing Council, and SPC Heads of Fisheries.

The consultancy is for a period not exceeding 76 days (i.e. 76 days @ \$500 USD a day). Payment for the consultancy will be made consistent with standard FFA contract where 25% is paid in advance and the remainder is paid on completion of the contract.

The work of the consultant will be monitored by all the focal points through the FFA focal point.

Budget (\$ US)

Professional fees	76 days @ \$500	\$38,000
Stage 1 – document outline	\$6,000	
Stage 2- final regional Shark Plan document	\$32,000	
Travel: flights and in-country expenses for Noumea (to be booked by FFA)		\$5,000
Total		<u>\$43,000</u>