



**ANNUAL REPORT FOR JAPAN TRUST FUND
THE THIRD PHASE
*(Covering 2023 Activities including Approved Projects for 2024)***

JTF-AR-2024
7 April 2024

Participating Countries and the Secretariat

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Annual Report for Japan Trust Fund The Fourth Phase

(Covering ongoing 2023 project activities including approved projects for 2024)

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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 2024; and the 2023 ongoing projects including their associated administrative issues.

II. Administration

The 2023 JTF project was coordinated and administered by the WCPFC Secretariat in cooperation with Japan (Mr. Shinji Hiruma, Assistant Director, International Affairs Division, Fisheries Agency of Japan, and Ms. Aya Matsushima, who was replaced in 2nd Quarter of 2023 by Mr Masahide Kannou, Fisheries Agency of Japan).

The selection of the 2024 projects to be funded by the JTF among several proposals submitted by the WCPFC Members was administered by Japan in collaboration with the JTF advisory group, comprising the WCPFC Secretariat, the Pacific Community - Oceanic Fisheries Program (Dr. Graham Pilling), the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the Parties to the Nauru Agreement Office (PNAO).

The total JTF for 2024 is USD 168,474. The 2024 JTF was significantly reduced by 28% due to depreciation in the currency exchange rate of Japanese Yen which resulted in budget reduction in terms of US dollars. After deduction of the 7.5% administrative fee of USD 12,635.55, the balance available for 2024 projects is around USD 155,838.45.

The *Call for Proposals of the Japan Trust Fund for 2024* was sent out on 20th of November 2023 (WCPFC Circular 2023/97) and another circular (WCPFC Circular 2024/01) was sent on 2nd January 2024 to extend the deadline to 9 February 2024. Eight (8) proposals were received by the said deadline, with a total budget request close to USD 283, 945.27. Due to the limited budget for 2024 JTF, prioritization of the project proposals was done and was based on the objectives of the JTF and evaluation of the JTF Steering Committee. A Summary of JTF Work Plan for 2024 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 2023 are in **Annex 2**.

III. Progress of Ongoing Projects from Previous Years

1) 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 undertake a comprehensive review of MMR's offshore fisheries Competent Authority programs.

C. Proposed Work

- MoU – Develop and finalise a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Health (MoH) and MMR to provide legal powers to MMR as a CA
- HACCP Strategy – Development of a national HACCP strategy
- Implementation plan – Development of an implementation plan for the HACCP strategy, including completion of Part 2 training
- Regulations – Develop and finalise regulations, standards, policies and a CA Checklist
- Calendar - Finalise Competent Authority training and implementation
- Awareness – Create awareness and education information packs for stakeholders and the general public on CA requirements, standards and legislation etc.
- Consultation – Hold consultations with stake holders and the general public on CA work
- Inspections – undertake inspections to train fisheries officers on HACCP CA requirements

D. Project Update

Cook Islands informed the Steering Committee that the project activities were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and most of this work is still ongoing. Cook Islands informed activities for this project are expected to be completed in January 2024 and FFA has also offered their assistance for Cook Islands related to this project.

E. Challenges faced

- Limited staffing capacity and competing priorities caused delays in progressing the work.

F. Way forward

As noted above, project activities are still ongoing. The Secretariat will continue to coordinate with the Cook Islands to update this report when additional information is provided by the proponent.

2) 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.

B. Proposed Work

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

C. 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.

D. Project Update

Cook Islands informed the previous Steering Committee that a tender process of exemption from the Government's Tender Committee was requested to facilitate the use of funds for consultancy (above HoM discretionary level). With the assistance from FFA, a consultant from the International Environmental Law Project was identified to deliver courses. The planning process on materials and course content is in progress. In 2022, Cook Islands requested to carry over the funds for an additional year and Japan agreed to the request for extension.

In December 2022, Cook Islands informed that the project activities have been completed such as course material development (9 modules, study guide plus quiz/test materials), in-country delivery of courses to two cohorts (with 1 expert only) during a single visit to Rarotonga. Some of the activities have been undertaken in a reduced capacity given travel, expert availability, and other factors. In this case, their total received budget of NZD 92,406 has some savings of about NZD 22,515. The Cook Islands requested that the remaining funds be used to update the training materials and digitize the said materials (e.g. videos) to provide for self-learning. The Cook Islands prepared a proposal related to this request which was approved by Japan. That request has now been formally approved by the Committee. Negotiations with the service provider have commenced regarding a timeline and schedule of activities, Contracting is expected to be completed by the end of July 2023.

During the 2023 Steering Committee, Cook Islands informed that the work for this project is still ongoing noting the extension of the project activities until December 2023.

E. Challenges faced

The Cook Islands Government's plan of action regarding the COVID-19 pandemic this year has caused MMR to re-design the project to include possibilities for a mixed mode of delivery.

F. Way forward

As noted above, Cook Islands requested to utilize the remaining funds from the original project to continue to enhance the training materials and then position the modules where they will be accessible online for new/other Cook Islands participants. The work of this project is still ongoing, noting the extension of the project activities until December 2023. The Secretariat will continue to liaise with the Cook Islands for the updated status of the project activities and will revise this report once additional information is provided.

3) Project #1 (2023): 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 (Palau)

A. Project Objectives

1. To assess and develop a fisheries electronic reporting and electronic monitoring program for information gathering and sharing.
2. 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.
3. 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.

B. Results and Discussions or Status of the Project

- 1. To seek and engage in widespread consultation with all relevant stakeholders regarding the design, development, and implementation of ER/EM Program.**

This activity is still ongoing. After the two training courses and workshop conducted, Palau have gathered some information to start the development of the ER/EM program. Our legal counsel has been tasked to use this information to start drafting the operation procedures for ER and EM. When Palau gather more information from other stakeholders Palau would be able to provide the information to be included in the operation procedures. Since the whole Ministry has only one legal counsel, Palau is still in the process of completing these operational procedures.

2. **To work to streamline a number of agreements, rules and regulations, to be inline and consistent across the Bureau and with national, regional, and international obligations and laws.**

On December 14-15, the Bureau of Fisheries conducted a two-day workshop for the two relevant fishing company in Palau, representatives from Marine Law, Bureau of transportation, and OneReef. This workshop covered the obligations and law the fishing companies need to follow, and introduced new fishing obligations (EF/EM) to them and sought their thoughts on how the government and growing local fishing companies can work together to start implementing ER/EM. **(See Attachment 1: Program/Agenda; Attachment 2: Pictures and description; Attachment 3: Signup workshop sheet)**

3. **To conduct workshop and training for relevant Fisheries Officers on data collection procedures or methods on ER/EM**

On September 18-22, 2023, the Bureau of Fisheries had an In-Country training/workshop. Two personnel from the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNAO) flew to Palau to conduct this training/workshop. There were two parts to this 5-day workshop/training. The first part was a closed training session for the public and open to relevant Fisheries Officers. The second part of the meeting was open to the two locally owned commercial longline fishing companies in Palau. Palau setup relevant training modules for the company to use for ER and introduce the concept of ER/EM to them. **(See Attachment 4: In-Country Training Program).**

Palau reiterated that activities for this project are ongoing.

C. Budget and Fund Balance

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	USD 45,500.00
Funds Utilized	USD 20,000.00
In-Kind Contribution <i>(if any)</i>	(USD 92,000 * 44%) = USD 40,480
Other Funding Source/s <i>(if any)</i>	NA

D. Fund Balance

Palau seeks to use the remaining balance to supplement the ongoing work of the development of the EM and ER operational procedures, and further supplement the new proposed ER/EM Program for the Division of Oceanic Fisheries.

E. Comments/Conclusions/Feedback/Suggestions/Recommendations

Palau finds it to be very costly for small local longline fishing companies and foreign based longline fishing fleets to carry the burden of Electronic Monitoring implementation, the cost of equipment and installation can be very high. Palau is also

seeking to have options of having observers on board the fishing vessels by 2025 while Palau will slowly implement Electronic Monitoring.

The Japan Trust Fund does help the Small Island Developing States develop their fishing industry and Palau is very grateful for the funding opportunities.

4) 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 funds were received by Solomon Islands in late October 2023 and the training for their MCS Officers in Noro on the FIMS Compliance Module was conducted in November 2023, and then the training of their Honiara-based MCS Officers is yet to be conducted this year 2024. Solomon Islands is planning to conduct the training before the end of March or early April 2024.

C. Budget

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	USD 34,965.00
Funds Utilized	USD 20,000.00
In-Kind Contribution <i>(if any)</i>	
Other Funding Source/s <i>(if any)</i>	NA
Balance	USD 14,965.00

D. Fund Balance

The fund balance of USD 14,965 will be used to conduct the remaining activities.

E. Comments/Conclusions/Feedback/Suggestions/Recommendations

The project activities are still ongoing and are expected to be concluded in April 2024.

5) 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 once every 2 months (6 times to Noro) this year 2023 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 or Status of the Project

The Solomon Islands had conducted an onsite technical support training for their Industries in Noro last November 2023. They had a technical support trip on 20th January 2024 and will be having follow-up technical support trips in the coming weeks/months until July 2024.

C. Budget

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	USD 24,675.00

Funds Utilized	USD 12,300.00
In-Kind Contribution <i>(if any)</i>	None
Other Funding Source/s <i>(if any)</i>	N/A
Balance	USD 12,375.00

D. Fund Balance

The remaining balance of USD 12,375 will be used to conclude the outstanding project activities.

E. Comments/Conclusions/Feedback/Suggestions/Recommendations

The project activities are still ongoing and are expected to be concluded in July 2024.

6) 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 or Status of the Project

Solomon Islands was not able to finalize and launch their draft EM policy last year 2023. The Solomon Islands will have the final consultation with their Industries and the management before the end of this month and they should have their final draft for the executive management to approve before they go for printing and launching in June 2024.

C. Budget

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	USD 48,247.50
Funds Utilized	USD 35,000.00
In-Kind Contribution <i>(if any)</i>	None
Other Funding Source/s <i>(if any)</i>	NA
Balance	USD13,247.50

D. Fund Balance

The balance of USD13,247.50 is for the final consultations, printing, and launching.

E. Comments/Conclusions/Feedback/Suggestions/Recommendations

The project activities are still ongoing and are expected to be concluded in June 2024.

Annex 1. Summary of JTF Work Plan for 2024 (Year 1, Phase 4 Program)

#	Beneficiary Member(s)	Contacts	Project Title	Objectives	Budget (USD)
1	South Pacific Group (SPG) ¹	<p>Roseti Imo – Chair of the South Pacific Group Email: roseti.imo@maf.gov.ws</p> <p>Lars Olsen - SPG Technical Adviser Email: olsenpacific@gmail.com</p>	Development of a Register of Fishing Rights and a Catch Estimation and Visualisation Tool to enable zone-based management of south Pacific albacore by the South Pacific Group	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop the system specifications through consultation with SPG, FFA, and SPC. 2. Develop the Register of Fishing Rights and the Catch Estimation and Visualisation Tool in consultation with SPG, FFA, and SPC. 3. Test, demonstrate the system, and train parties on use of the system. 	50,000.00
2	Tonga	<p>Dr. Sione Vailala Matoto CEO for Fisheries Email: ceo@tongafish.gov.to; vailala@yahoo.com</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.vaipuna@tongafish.gov.to; nia.vaipuna@gmail.com</p>	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 (<i>Port Sampling</i>)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To fund tuna data collection (port sampling) over one full calendar year (2024) in Tonga 2. To fund artisanal tuna data collection over one full calendar year (2024) in Tonga. 3. To empower staff capacity to enable collection of data and enter into database. 4. To conduct E-Reporting training of all new tuna vessel masters, port samplers and artisanal data officers. 5. That the excess amount from each month (when estimated number of vessels not reach target which means less than 20 unloading duties on tuna vessels per month) will be available to 	46,508.00

¹ Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu

				<p>improve management and provide awareness of data collection.</p> <p>6. To enhance the capacity of fisheries personnel on data management and reporting by attending the annual Tuna Data Workshop at SPC Noumea.</p>	
3	Samoa	<p>Moli Amosa Iakopo Samoa Principal Fisheries Officer-Offshore and Compliance Units Email: moli.iakopo@maf.gov.ws</p> <p>Roseti Imo Samoa Fisheries ACEO-MAF Email: roseti.imo@maf.gov.ws</p>	Enhancing Capacity and Strengthening Samoa National Observer Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand the observer program to include certified observers from the public. 2. To Identify and train an individual for the role of a debriefer and Develop and implement standardized debriefing procedures. 3. Create SOPs for various aspects of observer tasks, ensuring consistency and compliance. 4. Formulate a comprehensive emergency action plan to guide observers in crisis situations. 5. Develop a Fisheries Observer Policy tailored to Samoa's context and in line with ROP requirements. 	33,000.00
4	Palau	<p>Ms. Persis Omelau, Acting Director Bureau of Fisheries Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Environment P.O. Box 117, Koror, Palau, 96940 Email: omelaupersis@gmail.com</p> <p>Keith Mesebeluu, Policy Specialist/Acting Chief Email: keithmesebeluu@gmail.com</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"> 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. 2. Identify types of Electronic Monitoring System that are suitable and cost-effective for 	53,500.00

		Mr. Everson Sengebau, EM Officer Observer Email: ebs6ya@gmail.com Ms. Zilah Oiterong, Fisheries Licensing and Revenue Officer Email: dirremeang@gmail.com		Palau's local fishing industry. Palau's local fishing industries have a fully functioning ER/EM system in place.	
	Sub-total			Sum of project budget requested	183,008.00
	WCPFC	Aaron Nighswander aaron.nighswander@wcpfc.int	7.5% administrative fee	Overhead	12,635.55
	JTF 2024				168,474.00
	Grand Total			Total JTF for 2024	195,643.55²

² The USD 27,169.55 will be taken from the remaining Japan Trust Fund from previous years (Refer to WCPFC20-2023-FAC17-07).

Annex 2. Brief Reports of Completed JTF Projects in 2023

1) Project #4 (2023): 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. Project Objectives

1. To fund tuna data collection (port sampling) over one full calendar year (2023) in Tonga.
2. To fund artisanal tuna data collection over one full calendar year (2023) in Tonga.
3. To empower staff capacity to enable collection of data and enter into database.
4. To conduct E-Reporting training of all new tuna vessel masters, port samplers and artisanal data officers.
5. 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 SPC Noumea.

B. Results and Discussions

1. Port Sampling Data Collection

The project's assistance in collecting tuna data from longline fleets in Tonga remained an ongoing and integral activity throughout 2023. This part of the report outlines the key achievements and contributions to sustainable fisheries management during this period.

- In 2023, there were 6 domestic tuna vessels and 9 foreign fishing vessels engaged in tuna fishing operations in our waters.
- Logsheets coverage maintained a commendable 100% coverage ensuring comprehensive documentation of fishing activities.
- A total of 130 trips were undertaken by these vessels, significantly enhancing the scope of data collection efforts.

The consistent data collection from both domestic and foreign fishing vessels underscores Tonga's commitment to sustainable fisheries management. Comprehensive logsheets coverage provides valuable insights into tuna stocks and fishing patterns, which are crucial for informed decision-making and effective resource management.

2. Tuna Artisanal Data collection:

The project's continued assistance has led to significant advancements in Tuna Artisanal data collection in Tonga during 2023. The Ministry has begun to see the progress made and the impact on enhancing our understanding of artisanal tuna fishing activities across all island groups.

Key achievements:

- With the ongoing support of the project, Tuna Artisanal data collection efforts have expanded to cover all the island groups of Tonga.
- A total of 333 logsheets were collected and submitted using the TAILS platform, indicating a substantial increase in data capture and documentation.

3. Staff capacity

In 2023, the project facilitated the recruitment and funding of five daily paid data monitors by the Ministry, contributing to enhanced staff capacity for tuna data collection across various island groups in Tonga.

- Through the project's support, the Ministry successfully recruited and funded five daily paid data monitors from different island groups.
- These data monitors were strategically deployed to their respective island groups, ensuring localized data collection efforts and maximizing coverage.
- The appointed data monitors were tasked with collecting tuna artisanal data, including catch information, fishing effort, and other relevant parameters, from their designated island groups.
- They played a crucial role in facilitating data collection activities at the grassroots level, interacting directly with local fishers and communities to gather accurate and timely information.
- The addition of five daily paid data monitors significantly bolstered the Ministry's capacity to collect comprehensive tuna artisanal data from across Tonga.

4. E Reporting

The project's efforts to assist and maintain high-quality electronic reporting in Tonga continued throughout 2023, resulting in significant achievements in data collection efficiency and accuracy.

- Electronic reporting initiatives in Tonga have been instrumental in streamlining data collection processes and improving data accuracy.
- Both domestic vessels and foreign fishing vessels achieved 100% coverage in electronic reporting, marking a substantial milestone in enhancing data collection capabilities.

5. Data collection awareness and feedback consultation

- Throughout 2023, the project prioritized efforts to enhance public awareness and facilitate feedback consultations with stakeholders regarding data collection activities in Tonga.

Key Activity:

- Conduct quarterly feedback consultation sessions to discuss input and insights from stakeholders regarding data collection processes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

6. Challenges

- Despite notable achievements, challenges persist due to staff turnovers and the influx of new vessels operating in Tonga's waters.
- Priority has been placed on providing training for new port samplers, data monitors, and vessel captains to ensure seamless integration into electronic reporting systems

7. Way forward

- Continued investment in training and capacity building efforts will be crucial for sustaining electronic reporting initiatives amidst evolving staffing and operational dynamics.
- Emphasis will be placed on leveraging electronic reporting data to inform evidence-based decision-making and enhance fisheries management practices in Tonga.
- Commit to ongoing engagement with stakeholders to maintain awareness and solicit feedback on data collection activities.

C. Budget

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	USD55,326.00
Funds Utilized	Port Sampling fees: USD10,110.00 Daily data Monitors wages: USD35,125.00 Payment for internet: USD120.00 Quarterly consultation: USD2,100.00 Electronic reporting Training: USD 1,000.00 Total utilized: USD 48,455.00
In-Kind Contribution <i>(if any)</i>	Vehicle Tablets for e-Reporting
Other Funding Source/s <i>(if any)</i>	NA
Balance	USD 6,871.00

D. Fund Balance

The remaining fund has been committed to funding the daily paid wages of the current five officers and funding of one staff to attend the 18th Tuna Data workshop in April 8th – 12th 2024.

E. Comments/Conclusions/Feedback/Suggestions/Recommendations

Tonga would like to express our gratitude to the Japanese Trust fund (JTF) for their unwavering and continues support, which has enabled Tonga to continue and strengthen its tuna data collection activities. Their support has been instrumental in the success of this project and the advancement of sustainable fisheries management practices in our region.

The significant progress achieved in Tuna Artisanal data collection in Tonga in 2023 is a testament to the effectiveness of collaborative efforts and sustained support from the project. Moving forward, it is imperative to continue building upon these achievements, further enhancing data collection methodologies, and strengthening partnerships to ensure the sustainable management of artisanal tuna fisheries in Tonga.

The invaluable contributions of the project have not only expanded data coverage but also fostered local engagement and empowerment within the fisheries sector. Moving forward, continued support and investment in staff capacity building will be essential for sustaining and furthering the project's objectives. The progress made in electronic reporting initiatives in Tonga during 2023 is a testament to the effectiveness of collaborative efforts and strategic investments in technology and capacity building. Again, I hereby extend our great appreciation with thanks to the Government of Japan in granting us with these financial support through Japan Trust Fund. We witness the benefit of this project on our current port sampling program by providing employment to Tonga people and also to complete our obligation to WCPFC and other regional organization. Malo 'aupito!!!!

TAILS data collection in Vava'u



TAILS Data collection in Ha'apai



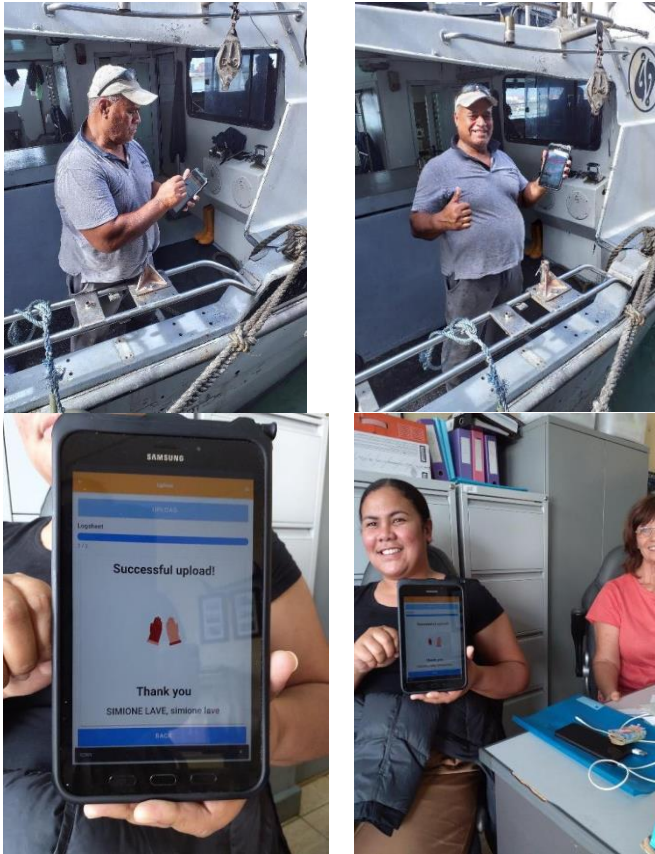
TAILS data collection from Niua Fo'ou



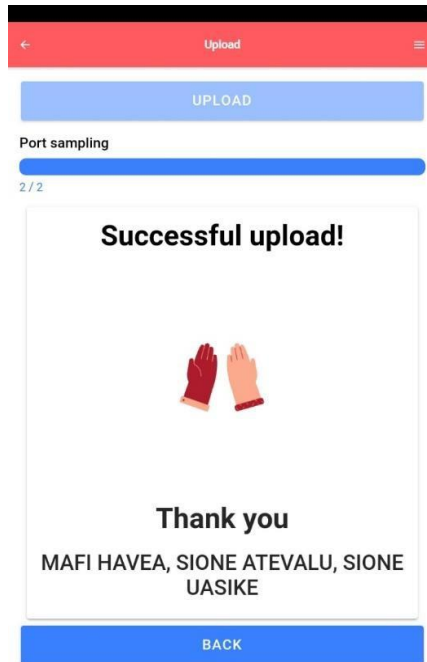
Electronic Reporting training in Vava'u



Sea Captain of Pacific Breeze using Onboard apps for Data Entry of his logsheet



Port samplers using Onshore apps for port sampling data entry.



2) Project #4 (2023): Capacity Building and Strengthening of Tonga National Observer Program

A. Project Objectives

This project seeks to strengthen Tonga’s national observer program 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 to keep observers on the job.

B. Results and Discussions

There were 12 active observers that benefited from this fund. When they came back from a trip, handed in their data then they were debriefed by a certified debriefer. When they scored 85% and above, they were awarded a bonus for collecting good-quality data. Then observers entered their own data after debriefing.

The project objectives were attained and satisfied, by observers who entered their data and awarded a bonus when collected quality data.

C. Budget

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	USD 37,800.00
Funds Utilized	USD 36,545.00
In-Kind Contribution <i>(if any)</i>	
Other Funding Source/s <i>(if any)</i>	
Balance	USD 1,255.00

D. Fund Balance

The remaining funds USD\$1,255 will be used to pay data entry for observers and reward bonus for good quality data collected by observers.

E. Comments/Conclusions/Feedback/Suggestions/Recommendations

As Tonga is still a small island developing member country our observer fee is quite low in comparison to other observer programs which is 30usd per day while out at sea. This is what makes the idea to seek funds for observers to come and enter data and also reward bonuses for good quality data. There is also a great improvement in data quality as reported by debriefers. Observers were encouraged to collect quality data for when they achieved 85% score, they were expected to pay a bonus. These incentives have kept some observers on the

job as most observers have left the program and joined the Australia Labour Mobility Scheme and also New Zealand Seasonal Employer Scheme.

Currently, there is a high turnover rate and there is a plan to introduce observer program to the outer island and train new observers. It is also proposed in our JTF 2024 seeking funds to train more observers from the island so they will stay longer in the observer program. We look forward to a favorable reply from the Government of Japan.

In conclusion, Tonga looks forward to continued assistance, especially for the regional agencies, and welcomes all help and support, particularly the areas identified in the Japan Trust Fund Proposal.

Tonga acknowledges with appreciation all assistance rendered by the Government of Japan through the Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) towards its national program.

3) Project #5 (2023): Capacity Building and Strengthening of Tonga Fisheries Legal Section, 2023

A. 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.

B. Results and Discussions

The results include progress in Travel Reports being submitted with the assistance of minutes taken by the legal assistant. Administrative matters are ongoing and in progress such as organizing and maintaining a good record of the Legal Officer's files and documents when necessary.

However, unfortunately, in the beginning of this year, there has been no legal training conducted yet, but only consultations. The first consultation conducted was an in-house consultation with the Science and Policy and Planning division regarding the amendments that were made to the Ministry's Fisheries Management (Conservation) Regulations. These amendments were done due to new implementations made by the Ministry for the betterment of the fisheries sector development.

In addition, consultations were then conducted to the outer islands first and then with the main islands in reviewing of betterment and development of the Fisheries plan of the Ministry. The conductivity of the legal framework is still ongoing as mentioned. Hence, the Japan Trust Fund has been a great asset to the Legal Assistant's daily salary and wages since the project funded the legal section.



Vava'u Consultation

This image as stated was taken by the Media person of the Ministry and pictured are the stakeholders and relevant employees of the Ministry of Fisheries.

C. Budget

Details	Amount (in USD)
Funds Received	USD 8,697.10
Funds Utilized	USD 8,697.10
In-Kind Contribution <i>(if any)</i>	Miscellaneous expenses
Other Funding Source/s <i>(if any)</i>	Tonga Ministry of Fisheries

D. Fund Balance

The funds were fully utilized.

E. Comments/Conclusions/Feedbacks/Suggestions/Recommendations

The legal sector is very appreciative of the Japan Trust Fund for being a great support in assisting with the legal assistant's wages and salary. Legal assistance has been a great aspect to the legal sector, so the Legal Officer can have assistance in terms of organizing not only administrative prospects, but to provide assistance in organizing training, when necessary, with the Ministry.

Therefore, the witnessing of this prestigious and astounding project has been a great benefit for the legal sector and the Ministry as a whole in providing assistance to build the Ministry's legal sector and framework nationally in assisting with the draft and amendment of its legislation and regulations.

Attachment 1: Program/Agenda

**Long Line Fishing Commercial Fisheries Workshop
December 13 -14, 2023
Bureau of Fisheries Conference Room
Workshop Agenda**

Day 1: Wednesday

Opening of Workshop 9:00 am – 9:10 am (Director)

Sign in & Morning tea 9:10 am – 9:20 am (Osima)

Long line Agreement 9:20 am – 9:40 am (Keith)

- (Article I Cooperation)
- (Article II Jurisdiction)
- (Article III Consultations and Dispute Settlement)
- Appendix 1 Chart of the Exclusive Economic Zone of Palau and Prohibited fishing area
- Questions and Answers

Long Line Agreement 9:40 am - 10:00 am (Zilah)

- (Article IV Authorization to Fish)
- Requirements for fishing permit
- Appendix 2 Fee Schedule
- Appendix 3 Form of Permit Application
- Appendix 4 Form of Fishing Permit
- Questions and Answers

Long Line Agreement 10:00 am - 10:20 am (Everson)

- (Article V Responsibility of the Company)
- (Article VI Crew Labor Standards)
- Questions and Answers

Long Line Agreement 10:20 am - 10:40 am (Zilah)

- (Article VII Fee payment and Licensing)
- Questions and Answers

Long Line Agreement 10:40 am - 11:00 am (Everson)

- (Article VIII Reporting)
- (Article IX Vessel Identification and Communication)
- Questions and Answers

Long Line Agreement 11:00 am - 11:20 am (Zilah)

- (Article X Fishing Effort and Catch Limits)
- VDS
- Questions and Answers

Long Line Agreement 11:20 am - 11:40 am (Everson)

- (Article XI Inspection by Law Enforcement Officers)
- Questions and Answers

Long Line Agreement11:40 am - 12:00 am (Meisai)

- (Article XII Observers)
- Questions and Answers

Day 2: Thursday

Opening of Workshop 9:00 am – 9:10 am (Director)

Sign in & Morning tea 9:10 am – 9:20 am (Osima)

Long Line Agreement 9:20 am – 9:40 am (Keith)

- (Article XIII Agent, Port Entry and Insurance)
- Questions and Answers

Long Line Agreement 9:40 am - 10:00 am (Osima)

- (Article XIV Off-Loading)
- Questions and Answers

Long Line Agreement 10:00 am - 10:20 am (Keith)

- (Article XV Agreement Approval and Term)
- Questions and Answers

New Items to be included in the Agreement10:20 am - 10:30 am (Keith)

Electronic Reporting10:30 am - 11:00 am (Everson)

- SPC app (Olló)
- PNA iFIMs

Closing of the Workshop 11:30 am - 12 noon

- Miscellaneous

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- **Questions and Answers**

Attacment 2: Pictures with description

Building Local Companies awareness on Long Line Fishing Management, Licensing, and Requirements

OCEANIC FISHERIES

On December 13 and 14, Bureau of Fisheries invited Belau Offshore Fishers Inc. and Palau Commercial Fishing Company to a workshop at the Bureau of Fisheries Conference room. This Long Line Fisheries workshop went over regional, subregional, and national agreements and regulations that regulate the commercial fishing industry in the Western Central Pacific Ocean.

Palau, as a member of these organizations (Western Central Pacific Commission, Forum Fisheries Agency, and Parties to the Nauru Agreement) has created National Laws and Regulation that are aligned with the region.

As part of growing and strengthening Palau's commercial fishing industry, the Oceanic Team through this workshop aimed to help these companies understand and follow these fishing laws and regulation.

The workshop went through requirements as stated in Palau Title 27 and the PNMS Regulations. For example, all licensed commercial fishing vessels has to have a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS). It is unlawful and carries a fine if a vessels VMS is tampered with. VMS enables Oceanic Division to track how many fishing days using the Information Management System (FIMS). Marine Law also uses this system to track the movements of all the licensed vessel making sure the are fishing within the DFZ. Another important agenda item that was covered during the workshop is the new requirements for all longline fishing vessel to start Electronic Reporting (ER). We are currently working with these companies so they do meet the standard requirement for ER and Palau will be compliant with this regional Conservation Management Measure for ER

Bureau of Fisheries also wants to thank Director of Transportation and Jeremiah Ngiraterged who also join this very important meeting and shared very insightful information that complemented the workshop



Workshop Participants



Attachment 3: Sign up Sheet for the workshop

Commercial Long Line Fishing Regulation Workshop

Bureau of Fisheries/Oceanic Division

December 13-14

BOF Conference Room

12/13/2023

	Name	Company	Position	Contact #	Email
1	Mary Ngirmpis	PFCC	NO	775-4472	mengrmpis@gmail.com
2	Ulai Tehzill	KCC	Consultant	775-2459	lthhill@outlook.com
3	GEMMA MANAOS	BOFI	BOOKS/BOOK	488-5093	bafipalau@gmail.com
4	OKADA TEHITAK	BOFI	PRE-SIDE	775-8186	okaditeh@gmail.com
5	JERRY Nakama	BOFI	Member	775-5871	JerryNakama@comcast.com
6	HENCEL Takami	BOFI	Member	779-2786	
7	Jaramiah Ngirmpis	BOFI	Intel Officer	488-6740	bjpahu.opcenter@gmail.com
8	Tuncukt Shmall	BOFI	Treasurer	775-1754	
9	Hayes Moses	BYT	Director	775-5595	maritime.palau@gmail.com
10	Madetsar Ngirmpis	Oneleaf	Director	775-4360	madetsar@oneleaf.org
11	Sachi S. Jones	Oneleaf	Development Coordinator	488-4360	sachi@oneleaf.org
12	Toula Madal	BOFI	Sec.	488-5093	mtellach@gmail.com
13	PERCIS Omezu	BOF	Finance Sp	775-3856	percisomezu@gmail.com
14	Osima Inano	BOF	Data Entry	775-3323	inanoosima@gmail.com
15	Zilab Citrony	BOF	LICENSING	775-1657	citrony@bof.gov
16	Merrill Chin	BOF	Legal Dept	778-3981	merrill@bof.gov
17	Natly Sisoa	BOF	TRAINING	488-4438	
18	EVERETT GERRARD	BOF	COMPLIANCE	775-3975	EVERETT@BOF.GOV
19	Keith Mesobelu	BOF	as/chief	775-2003	Keithmesobelu@gmail.com
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Commercial Long Line Fishing Regulation Workshop

Bureau of Fisheries/Oceanic Division

December 13-14

BOF Conference Room

12/14/23

	Name	Company	Position	Contact #	Email
1	OKADA TECHITOKU	BOFI	PRESIDENT	775-8184	okadaitong@gmail.com
2	GEMMA LIALACIS	BOFI	PROMOTER	468-5042	lialacis@gmail.com
3	Ulani Tetfull	BOFI/KCC	consultant	775-2457	utetfull@outlook.com
4	Adolph Demi	BOFI		775-2295	ademi@gmail.com
5	Hayes Moses	BMT	Director	775-5595	maritime_palau@gmail.com
6	Tommy T. Shmull	BOFI		75-1754	
7	Hence Takawa	BOFI		719-2786	
8	MARK NAWANG	PCFC	Director	775-164	marknawang@gmail.com
9	MARK NAWANG	PCFC	Adm	775-4477	marknawang@gmail.com
10	Fredrick K. K.	BOFI	Sec.	775-3529	fredrickk@gmail.com
11	Wayne Andrew	One Reef	Director	775-1969	Wayne@onereef.org
12	Deletha Campbell	DIF	Fisheries	775-3850	delethacampbell@gmail.com
13	Sachi Jones	One Reef	Comm's Coordinator	996-9224	sachi@onereef.org
14	Osima NAWANG	POF		775-3325	osimawang@gmail.com
15	Maria Chin	POF	Comm's Coordinator	775-3081	mariachin@gmail.com
16	ZILAH OSTEN	BMT	Licence	775-1507	zilahosten@gmail.com
17	Katly Sison	POF	Deputy	988-4938	
18	EVERETT SISON	BOF	COMPLIANCE	775-3751	EVERETT@BOF.MIL
19	Keith Mesebelun	BOF	a/chief	775-2283	keithmesebelun@gmail.com
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Attachment 4: In country training Program

Program for Palau In-Country VDS Training

18th to 22nd September 2023

Koror, Palau

DAY 1: 18 September 2023

0900-0930	Opening remarks from Palau followed by an Introduction of the Participants
0930-1000	Introduction and Overview of the Vessel Days Scheme (Presentation by VDS Manager)
1000-1015	Question and Discussions
1015-1030	Morning Tea
1030-1100	Overview of PNA FIMS (Presentation by VDS Officer)
1100-1200	Questions and Discussions
1200-1300	Lunch
1300-1330	iFIMS (Presentation and Demonstration by the VDS Manager)
1330-1400	Questions and Vessels
1400-1430	eFORMS Android Applications (VDS Officer)

1430-1500	Questions and Discussion
1500-1515	Afternoon Break
1515-1545	VDS Data Flow (VDS Officer)
1545-1615	Questions and Discussion

Day 2: 19th September 2023

0900-0930	Purse-seine Total Allowable Effort and Parties Allowable Efforts (VDS Manager)
0930-1000	Questions and Discussions
1015-1030	Morning Break
1030-1100	Longline TAE and PAEs (VDS Manager)
1100-1200	Questions and Discussions
1200-1300	Lunch
1300-1330	PAEs Calculation (VDS Manager)
1330-1400	Questions and Vessels
1400-1500	PAEs Activities
1500-1530	Introduction of Proposed TAEs and PAEs for Longline (VDS Manager)

1530-1615	Questions and Discussions
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Day 3: 20nd September 2023

0900-0930	Demonstration of Companies or Associations Vessel Days (VDS Officer)
0930-1000	Questions and Discussions
1015-1030	Morning Break
1030-1130	Hands On Trainings
1130-1200	Introduction and Demonstration of Trading Module (VDS Manager)
1200-1300	Lunch
1300-1330	Questions and Discussions
1330-1430	Hands On Trainings
1430-1500	Demonstration of Vessel Assignment (VDS Officer)
1500-1515	Afternoon Break
1515-1615	Hands On Trainings

Day 4: 21st September 2023

0900-0930	Introduction to Non-Fishing Days (VDS Officer)
0930-1000	Questions and Discussions
1015-1030	Morning Break
1030-1100	Demonstration of NFD Claims on eFORM Android App and iFIMS (VDS Officer)
1100-1200	Hands on Training (NFD Claims on eFORMs Android App and iFIMS)
1200-1300	Lunch
1300-1330	Demonstration of NFDs Verifications and Checking on PNA FIMS (VDS Officer)
1330-1400	Questions and Discussions
1400-1500	Hands On Training (NFD Verifications and Checkings on PNA FIMS)
1500-1515	Afternoon Break
1515-1530	OVR on FIMS (PNA Office) (VDS Manager)
1530-1600	EVR on FIMS (Party) (VDS Officer)
1600-1615	Questions and Discussions

Day 5: 22nd September 2023

0900-0930	Introduction and Overview of FSMA (VDS Manager)
0930-1000	Questions and Discussions
1000-1015	Morning Break
1015-1045	FSMA VDS Data (FIMS) (VDS Manager)
1045-1115	Questions and Discussions
1115-1130	Introduction and Overview of the Sub-Regional Pooling Arrangement (VDS Officer)
1130-1200	Questions and Discussions
1200-1300	Lunch
1330-1400	Palau 2023 VDS Record on FIMS (VDS Officer)
1400-1430	Questions and Discussions
1430-1500	Demonstration of VDS Monitoring on FIMS (VDS Officer)
1500-1515	Afternoon Break
1515-1530	Questions and Further Discussions
1530-1600	VDS Reports (VDS Manager)
1600-1615	Questions and Discussions

1615-1700

Feedbacks and Closing Remarks