

MFAT Management Response to Western Pacific East Asia  
Improved Tuna Monitoring Activity (WPEA-ITM)  
Mid-term Evaluation

Evaluation Report Recommendation	MFAT Response and Action (Agree, Partially Agree, Reject)
<b>Administrative</b>	
1. The Activity be extended, at no-cost, to March 2024.	<p><b>Partially Agree</b></p> <p>The Activity implementation period has been extended to December 2024 given the length of time that implementation was significantly impacted by the pandemic restrictions.</p>
2. Review and revise, as appropriate, the Activity Results Framework to support the remainder of the implementation of the WPEA-ITM.	<p><b>Agree</b></p> <p>The Activity Results Framework was updated as part of the 2021 Activity Progress Report to reflect the recommendations of the Mid-term Evaluation (MTE).</p>
3. Encourage participating countries to report on cross-cutting issues to each WPEA-ITM Steering Committee (SC).	<p><b>Agree</b></p> <p>The participating countries will be invited to report on cross-cutting issues at the next Steering Committee meeting in early 2023.</p>
4. Each participating country to prepare a transition/exit strategy that will describe on-going support to WPEA-ITM activities once project funding terminates.	<p><b>Agree</b></p> <p>Each participating country will prepare a transition/exit strategy, in conjunction with analysis of remaining gaps and needs, by March 2023.</p>

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<p>5. Resume in-country visitations by project management, support agencies such as SPC and the WCPFC Secretariat, and short-term contracted experts as soon as travel restrictions ease.</p>	<p><b>Agree</b></p> <p>In-country visitations recommenced in 2022 with the first face-to-face in June at the Harvest Strategy and Tri-Country Planning meeting in Brisbane.</p>
<p>6. Start preparations for a possible follow-up Activity at the conclusion of the WPEA-ITM.</p>	<p><b>Partially Agree</b></p> <p>Given the extension of the Activity implementation period to December 2024 and the transition/exit strategies that are being prepared, decisions on future projects funded by prospective donors can be delayed for a further year to give time for needs to be re-assessed.</p>
<p>7. Complete an in-country review of project-related financial management and reporting systems.</p>	<p><b>Partially Agree</b></p> <p>The Project Manager and WCPFC Secretariat's Finance and Administration Manager will continue to keep accurate records of project-related financial reports and documents. If MFAT were to fund an additional phase of the Activity, enhanced financial management and reporting accountability systems at national levels (where sub-contracting arrangements exist) would need to be demonstrated prior to contracting with WCPFC Secretariat if they were deemed insufficient by the donor.</p>

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8. Once a decision is made on the date for the conclusion of the WPEA-ITM, the Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with each participating country will need to be refreshed and formalised. (The Pacific Community (SPC) MOU is renewed annually).	<b>Agree</b>  The MOUs will be refreshed following the signing of no-cost extension between MFAT and WCPFC Secretariat.
9. The WCPFC Secretariat should rationalise the two project websites and consolidate them under one site on the WCPFC/wpea webpage.	<b>Agree</b>  The project websites have been consolidated.
10. If confirmed by MFAT as a requirement the Project Manager will need to start preparations for an Activity Completion Report.	<b>Partially Agree</b>  The timeline for preparing the Activity Completion Report has been extended as part of the no-cost extension.
<b><i>Fishery monitoring</i></b>	
11. Characterization of tuna fisheries - Significant work remains to achieve full monitoring of the catch and effort for all gears used to harvest Western and Central Pacific Ocean oceanic tuna resources from each participating country, to describe the species composition for all gears and to support sampling to better inform research to describe biological characteristics and stock dynamics. Preparations of annual programmes of work should focus on activities supporting these endeavours.	<b>Agree</b>  The revised costed workplan includes outputs and activities (including Output 4) to improve data collection and management for more specific characterisation of tuna fisheries.

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<p>12. Fishery monitoring in Vietnam and Indonesia - the Activity should maintain support for at least 12 enumerators in Vietnam and 13 enumerators in Indonesia through until the end of the Project. Each country should take responsibility for 50% of their costs in the final year of the WPEA-ITM. The Project Manager should initiate discussions with Vietnam and Indonesia regarding a strategy for transition from WPEA-funding support to national support so that fishery monitoring activities are sustained once WPEA-ITM funding is exhausted.</p>	<p><b>Partially agree</b></p> <p>This recommendation will be taken into account when a transition/exit strategy is developed (Recommendation 4).</p>
<p>13. Electronic monitoring (EM) trial - noting that EM requires a significant foundation in appropriate infrastructure and systems to provide a sound basis for trials, funding permitting, the Steering Committee could consider support to robustly formulated proposals to support EM trials consistent with the fishery monitoring objectives of the WPEA-ITM.</p>	<p><b>Partially agree</b></p> <p>Due to budget constraints, this recommendation will be considered as part of a decision on a possible follow-up phase to this Activity at the conclusion of the WPEA-ITM (Recommendation 6). For the current phase, the Activity will remain focused on the current data and observer data collection activities.</p>
<p><b><i>At-sea observer programmes</i></b></p>	
<p>14. At-sea observer programme - re-invigorate WPEA-ITM Output 3 aspirations in Vietnam and Indonesia.</p> <p>The potential for existing observer activity in Indonesia (through the Directorate General of Capture Fisheries, Research Institute for Tuna Fisheries and NGOs such as International Pole and Line Foundation and Asosiasi Perikanan Pole &amp; Line dan Handline Indonesia) to contribute observer data to WCPFC should undergo detailed assessment once travel restrictions are eased. The assessment would then provide a foundation for generating and Action Plan leading to Indonesian observer data being submitted to WCPFC.</p>	<p><b>Partially Agree</b></p> <p>Output 3 of the revised costed workplan focuses on establishing a national observer programme in Vietnam and the observer capacity building for Indonesia and Vietnam, as well as improving observer data collection in the Philippines EEZ. Specific recommendations from the MTE on how to achieve this will be considered as part of implementation of Output 3.</p>

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<p>Given the challenges associated with establishing an observer programme in Vietnam, WPEA-ITM efforts in the medium term should focus on securing formal recognition of a national observer programme strategy, building on the work commenced at the workshop in March 2019.</p> <p>The WPEA-ITM Project Manager, in consultation with Indonesia and Vietnamese National Coordinators and relevant WCPFC and SPC staff, agree to terms of reference to support this work.</p> <p>Relevant SPC and WCPFC staff schedule the preparation of the reviews and development of national strategies in consultation with National Coordinators.</p> <p>The strategy to strengthen national observer programmes for fisheries targeting WCPO tuna resources in Vietnam and Indonesia will include a capacity development plan to provide for on-going training and certification needs. A similar plan, describing WCPFC and SPC support requirements, will be drafted for Philippines.</p> <p>The draft strategies will be reviewed and endorsed by national officials.</p> <p>On-going mentoring and capacity building support to the Philippines fisheries observer programme should also be maintained.</p>	<p>An Indonesia/ Vietnam study tour to the Philippines will also be undertaken to encourage knowledge exchange and capacity building among the participating countries on cost recovery and management of fisheries data.</p>
<p><b><i>Communication and outreach</i></b></p>	

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<p>15. Invite participating countries to submit proposals to support improved communications, including supporting infrastructure, to strengthen both national, and project-wide engagement and communications.</p>	<p><b>Agree</b></p> <p>The Activity has already provided funding for critical information technology upgrades in both the Philippines and Vietnam to address the immediate needs to enable continued data collection and communication between remote and central offices in response to pandemic restrictions.</p>
<p>16. Communications and outreach - Support for communications and outreach should be considered for each participating country. This may focus on building an understanding of the WCPFC among vessel operators in relation to obligations and reporting requirements. A local NGO may be one of the options available to develop and deliver such awareness raising.</p> <p>Awareness raising and outreach may also be beneficial for senior officials and Government Ministers in Vietnam. Outreach of this nature might be facilitated by the Project Manager.</p>	<p><b>Partially Agree</b></p> <p>The Project Manager and national coordinators will seek to engage with senior officials and Government Ministers in each of the participating countries to encourage communications and outreach for better understanding of the WCPFC obligations and reporting requirements among vessel operators.</p>
<p><b>Data systems</b></p>	
<p>17. Data systems integration/harmonisation - Duplicate systems for data management in national institutional arrangements should be avoided. The integration of data processing systems used by WCPFC members (TUFMAN2 and DORADO), which have been introduced to the participating countries under the WPEA, and national systems (Pusdatin in Indonesia and VNFishBase in Vietnam) would benefit from closer examination to promote efficiency through harmonisation,</p>	<p><b>Partially agree</b></p> <p>Indonesia and Vietnam will examine opportunities for enhanced efficiency through data systems integration and harmonisation, including through a Data Audit Review Workshop (Output 2.1.1)</p>

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standardisation and integration to a similar degree that has been achieved with the Philippines NSAP under NFRDI.	
<b>Capacity building</b>	
<p>18. Capacity building in data systems and stock assessment - There will be a need, for some time, for the WCPFC Secretariat's and SPC's advice and nurturing across all facets of fishery monitoring, data systems development and application, and stock assessment capacity building through the TDR and ACE Workshops, the stock assessment workshops in Noumea and continued mentoring support to the national observer programmes. Attention in this regard will assist national agencies utilise data generated under all WPEA initiatives since 2010 to inform national-level fisheries management initiatives. Annual programmes of work should be designed to include support for capacity building needs in this regard.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b></p> <p>The revised costed workplan includes outputs and activities (including sub-output 1.7) to support and encourage capacity building in data systems and stock assessments within the national agencies.</p>
<p>19. Capacity building: SPC and WCPFC Secretariat attachments - Once travel permits, one attachment to SPC and/or the WCPFC Secretariat should be made available to one candidate from Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam for up to 4 weeks (rather than 5 days), sponsored by the Activity, each year. The SPC attachments will focus on data systems, data analysis, fishery modelling and stock assessment. The WCPFC Secretariat attachments will be designed to strengthen knowledge and experience in WCPFC institutional processes. The Project Manager should consult with SPC and WCPFC regarding topics for possible support during such attachments, supporting arrangements (logistics and administration) and possible timing. Criteria for support might also be documented</p>	<p><b>Partially agree</b></p> <p>Due to budget constraints, this recommendation will be considered as part of a decision on a possible follow-up phase to this Activity at the conclusion of the WPEA-ITM (Recommendation 6).</p>



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<b><i>Fisheries management</i></b>	
<p>20. Fishery management - National-level harvest strategies, or related initiatives, for the management of oceanic tuna fisheries within waters under national jurisdiction are receiving increasing attention in all three participating countries. Countries are particularly supportive of initiatives to use of data generated under the WPEA to support assessments associated with the development of national tuna fisheries management arrangements. Preparations of annual programmes of work should include activities supporting these endeavours.</p>	<p><b>Partially agree</b></p> <p>Output 1.4 of the revised the costed workplan will support a workshop on National Tuna Management Plan for Indonesia.</p> <p>Output 1.7 integrates some harvest strategy approach training into the Stock Assessment Workshop.</p> <p>Due to budget constraints, a fuller response to be considered as part of a decision on a possible follow-up phase to this Activity at the conclusion of the WPEA-ITM (Recommendation 6).</p>

