



# INTERNATIONAL WATERS RESULTS NOTES

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## West Pacific East Asia Oceanic Fisheries Management Project

GEFID#: 3523, [[GEF Agency Project ID#]], Project Status: Active



1. National tuna management plan which includes enhancement of fishery data collection, assessment of fish stocks in their waters and allocation of annual allowable catch, monitoring of fishing operations and evaluation processes
2. This project has greatly enhanced the quality of Indonesian and Philippine fishery data that are applied to regional tuna stock assessments conducted for the WCPFC.
3. More than 60 full-time enumerators were hired at local tuna landing sites in the provinces of the three participating countries, along with data managers and data entry assistants to manage the data.

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## **PROJECT OBJECTIVE**

The Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) produces an annual tuna catch of over 2.4 million mt, which comprises 80% of the whole Pacific and 60% of the global catch. About 25% of the WCPO catch comes from the West Pacific East Asia (WPEA) region. However, the lack of sufficient good quality fishery data has been one of the top sources of uncertainty in regional stock assessments for the sustainable management of tuna resources. This project aims to facilitate national and sub-regional capacity building of the project participating countries (Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam) in their fishery monitoring. It also reviews national policy and legal and institutional arrangements for their possible reform in order to fully comply with international requirements, especially those from the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). Key tasks include collection of fishery data from landing sites, capacity building in data management and stock assessment, and development of national tuna fisheries management.

## **RESULTS: PROCESS**

Through this project, each participating country has developed a national tuna management plan which includes enhancement of fishery data collection, assessment of fish stocks in their waters and allocation of annual allowable catch, monitoring of fishing operations and evaluation processes. Management plans were first developed in Indonesia and Vietnam through this project, while an existing management plan was revised in the case of Philippines. The developed national plans were submitted to each respective government for review, approval and implementation.

Each participating country has provincial associations but there were no concrete activities on a national level in Indonesia and Vietnam, though both have initiated appropriate national structures. The project supported the establishment or updating of the structure and functioning of national level tuna associations.

## **RESULTS: STRESS REDUCTION**

Stress in relation to this project is interpreted to be the impact of fisheries on the ecosystem. The lack of sufficient fishery data leads to high uncertainty in stock assessment, increasing the risk of unsustainable management of regional tuna stocks in the Western Pacific Ocean. This project has greatly enhanced the quality of Indonesian and Philippine fishery data that are applied to regional tuna stock assessments conducted for the WCPFC. Specifically, the project has resulted in:

- More accurate estimates of total catch by species from both countries
- More accurate estimates of species-specific catches by major fishing gear types in both countries
- The first size composition data from Indonesian tuna fisheries in more than two decades
- The establishment of operational-level data collection programmes (logsheets) for the industrial purse seine fishery based in Philippines
- The initiation of an observer programme on larger purse seine vessels in Philippines

These enhanced data were used for the first time in the skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye stock assessments conducted in 2011 by the Secretariat of Pacific Community (SPC). The involvement of SPC in the Project has ensured that the new data collection programmes are consistent with those that are well-established in the Pacific Islands region. It is expected that similar progress with data collection will occur in Vietnam, and that these data will be incorporated into future regional stock assessments.

Hence the project has already done much to mitigate the risks of implied stresses to fish stocks by improving the quality of data applied to stock assessments in region.

## **RESULTS: WATER RESOURCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS**

This project hired local people to collect port sampling data. More than 60 full-time enumerators were hired at local tuna landing sites in the provinces of the three participating countries, along with data managers and data entry assistants to manage the data. A large portion of the MSP budget (about 47%) was allocated for the employment of the port samplers and local experts.

Other potential benefits include raising additional government taxes (through improved fish landing reports), and greater social awareness and responsibility in relation to the importance of correctly reporting fish catches to ensure sustainability of local fisheries.

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