



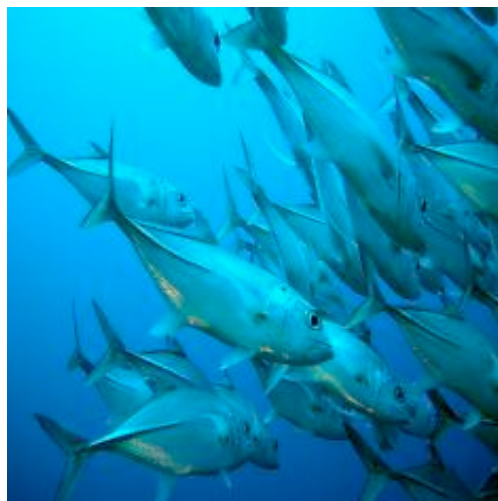
INTERNATIONAL WATERS RESULTS NOTES

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Pacific Islands Oceanic Fisheries Management Project

GEFID 2131: PIMS 2992, Project Status: Phase Completed



1. Supporting small Pacific Island developing States contribution to negotiating and bringing into force the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention; and facilitating the establishment of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.
2. Significant and ongoing changes in regional management and governance of tuna stocks in the western and central Pacific supported by improvements in scientific knowledge on oceanic transboundary fish stocks and related ecosystem aspects of the Western Tropical Pacific Warm Pool Large Marine Ecosystem (WTP LME).
3. Establishment and strengthening of national systems and skills in planning, managing information, developing and modifying legislation, inspection, observer coverage and participation in science programmes.

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PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The Strategic Action Programme for the International Waters of the Pacific (SAP) responds to transboundary concerns related to the degradation of quality and associated critical habitats and the unsustainable use of living and non-living resources. The Pacific elected to address these concerns through actions designed through a regional framework with targeted actions in two complementary contexts: that of Integrated Coastal and Watershed Management and Oceanic Fisheries Management (OFM). A full size project followed the completion of the OFM component under the SAP and this Results Note principally addresses the outcomes of the Pacific Islands Oceanic Fisheries Management Project (OFMP).

The immediate objectives of the Oceanic Fisheries Management Project address the two root causes of the threats to the sustainability of use of the Pacific region's oceanic fish resources identified in the transboundary diagnostic analysis for the SAP. The SAP identified the root causes underlying the concerns about, and threats relating to, oceanic fisheries in the International Waters in the region, as lack of understanding and weaknesses in governance, therefore, the two immediate objectives of the Project are:

-to improve understanding of the transboundary oceanic fish resources and related features of the Western and Central Pacific Warm Pool Large Marine Ecosystem (Information and Knowledge); and to

-create new regional institutional arrangements and reform, realign and strengthen national arrangements for conservation and management of transboundary oceanic fishery resources (Governance).

RESULTS: PROCESS

INDICATOR#1 Effective national inter-ministry coordination

A high level of coordination amongst Pacific countries was evident during the negotiation for the establishment of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention (WCPFC) and the establishment of the WCPF Commission in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia. This is evident in the adopted rules for decision making at the Commission, which operates a two-chambered voting arrangement requiring a majority by Pacific island countries to agree on matters of substance.

A greater degree of coordination was required at national levels between relevant government institutions dealing with fisheries management overall in aspects of law, compliance, science, economics and policy to bring the WCPFC into force and will continue to be important for successful compliance with the Commission's adopted conservation and management measures. An analysis of the participation at sub-regional WCPFC working group meetings would reflect the participation of representatives from relevant ministries in the efforts to ensure that legislation and policy allows Pac SIDS to met their international fisheries obligations

INDICATOR#2 Stakeholder involvement in SAP implementation

The single most significant process outcome from the OFMP has been the contribution to the establishment of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.

Without equal, the single most significant outcome of the OFMP is the establishment and adoption of rule and procedures and organisational structure for the WCPFC at its inaugural session in December 2004. All Pacific Island countries participate at high levels and attendance at meetings of the Commission itself (100%) and its sub committees on Science, Technical and Compliance (80 - 90%) and where appropriate a Northern Committee. The project has also supported the participation of non-governmental representation, both environment and industry in the work of the WCPFC with similarly high levels to those of Pacific Island country representation. This remains the case to the present day.

INDICATOR#3 Adoption of national and regional legal, policy and institutional reforms that address priority transboundary concerns

The establishment and operation of the Commission Sub-Committees for Science and Technical and Compliance occurred efficiently and without delay in 2005. This also included agreement on respective work

programmes and the formation of supporting specialist science groups with which to provide the Commission advice including the status of major tuna and other migratory species stocks and the impacts of conservation and management measures once they were in force.

Pacific Islands countries have been at the forefront in the development of conservation and management measures applicable regionally but have also through project assistance made substantive progress in aligning national legal, policy and compliance arrangements to ensure that they met their WCPFC obligations including reporting all of which is challenging for the smaller Pacific Islands administrations.

INDICATOR#4 Newly established and/or strengthened (existing) transboundary waters institutions

All major fishing States have ratified WCPFC as at June 2006. The Convention had entered into force in June 2004, with 12 of the 13 ratifications to bring the Convention into force from Pacific small island developing States (Pac SIDS). The WCPFC is ratified by 33 of the 34 States and Territories that participated in the WCPFC process. Indonesia has yet to achieve full membership.

The project has supported WCPFC-related legal, policy and institutional reviews under way in many Pacific SIDS including national fishery status reports, legal reviews and reviews of management plans based on EAFM, and by regional scientific, legal, compliance and policy workshops and consultations.

INDICATOR#5 Financial sustainability of joint transboundary waters institutions

The WCPFC currently operates a work programme with a budget of USD22 million. Its formula reflects that the burden of contributions for the management of migratory fish stocks are expected from those that fish.

Pacific Island countries formally established ministerial oversight for regional fisheries affairs in 2004. They continue to meet annually collectively and in the sub-regional formation of Fisheries Ministers from countries that are Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA). Ultimately, issues relating to oceanic fisheries in the Pacific are addressed at the Pacific Forum Heads of State level for the highest possible endorsement

INDICATOR#6 Pilot/demo projects demonstrate stress reduction measures on priority concerns

Pacific Islands States through project assistance and regional work programmes are implementing WCPFC measures and national conservation and management measures and a comprehensive overall assessment of impacts has yet to be conducted. Further details are provided in the results section below on stress reduction.

RESULTS: STRESS REDUCTION

INDICATOR#1 Improved information and knowledge on the oceanic transboundary fish stocks and related ecosystem aspects of the Western Tropical Pacific (WTP) warm pool large marine ecosystem (LME) being used by the WCPFC and Pacific SIDS to adopt and apply measures to enhance the conservation and management of transboundary oceanic fishery resources and protection of the biodiversity of the WTP LME

Conservation and management measures are based on advice provided by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community Oceanic Fisheries Programme (which is both contracted to provide science to the WCPFC and its Scientific Committee and directly to Pacific SIDS members) and on information collected and analysed from integrated national and regional monitoring programmes, databases and information systems.

Over the course of the last 5 years have identified fisheries stock that require management attention and have provided the information and knowledge required to develop conservation and management measures to apply to the region's oceanic resource and for the protection of the biodiversity of the Western Tropical warm Pool large marine ecosystem.

An early resolve at the new Commission was to limit vessels operating in the Commission area to those of members and cooperating non-members, and by 2005 conservation and management measures applied that sought to arrest the fishing effort and the take of big eye and yellowfin tuna. The WCPFC has also adopted

resolutions to apply FAO International Plans of Actions and guidelines that relate to the reduction of incidental catch of seabirds, turtle mortality, incidental catches of other non-fish species and overcapacity.

The project has supported the adoption by WCPFC and Pacific SIDS have adopted a range of innovative measures, some of them global precedent-setting including:

- The largest rights-based cap and trade management scheme in international fisheries – the PNA purse seine vessel day scheme (VDS)
- Seasonal closures on fishing on floating rafts (FADs) to reduce bycatches
- A 30% reduction in catches of vulnerable bigeye tuna by major longline fleets
- Large scale high seas closures to purse seine fishing vessels
- Compulsory retention of catches of major tuna species
- A ban on setting on whale sharks
- Measures to reduce shark finning
- Measures to mitigate bycatches of seabirds and turtles
- The world's largest onboard observer programme, including 100% coverage on tropical purse seine vessels
- The only high seas boarding and inspection programme in global tuna fisheries
- The world's largest international satellite-based vessel tracking programme, tracking over 2,000 high seas tuna vessels

Information and knowledge improvements have been made over the life of the project in determining the status of target and some non-target stocks, of better understanding the ecosystem including trophic status, of the impact of environmental variability on target species abundance and distribution and by assessments of ecological risk.

RESULTS: WATER RESOURCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

INDICATOR#1 Pacific SIDS improve the contribution to their sustainable development from improved management of transboundary oceanic fishery resources and from the conservation of oceanic marine biodiversity generally.

Pacific SIDS are committed to the improvement of their contribution towards sustainable development through improved management of the region's oceanic fishery resources and the conservation of oceanic marine biodiversity generally.

While target stock conservation priorities, including recommended reductions and limits to achieve those, have been agreed to the Commission, the impacts are not yet measurable. The most recent assessments of the major measure (bigeye tuna) suggest that the limits are starting to have a positive result, but probably need to be strengthened to achieve the agreed objective. Inroads have been made to measure indicators of socio-economic contributions of oceanic fisheries for Pacific SIDS through a range of economic indicators and associated modelling and significant reductions in the mortality from fishing on non-target species are becoming discernable.

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