

DEVFISH II project implementation update

The European Union (EU)-funded DEVFISH II project began in January 2011. The project is jointly implemented by SPC and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), and has five operational personnel between the two agencies. The project will run for four years and has two components: 1) domestic tuna industry development, and 2) illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing deterrence. The project's principal objective is to increase the sustainable use of highly migratory marine resources, particularly tuna, to alleviate poverty in P-ACP states, and reduce constraints to domestic tuna industry development.

During the first six months of implementation, the project focused on establishing and developing a work plan at the first project steering committee meeting at SPC in April 2011. This was followed by ongoing consultation with members and private sector stakeholders. A detailed work plan was submitted to the EU in July 2011, and with some subsequent modifications, it was approved for implementation. Active implementation began soon thereafter at both SPC and FFA. This article gives a brief summary of some of the key project activities to date, and provides plans for the remainder of the first implementation year (end of June 2012).

At SPC, the project focuses on support and development of national fisheries associations and the Pacific Island Tuna Industry Association (PITIA), and on the coordinated assessment of fisheries and enforcement databases. A round table meeting of national fisheries associations and PITIA was hosted in Fiji as part of the work programme planning. The project also supported PITIA and national association representation at the 2011 Pacific Tuna Forum in Palau. PITIA is playing a key role in ensuring liaison between the project and national associations. In early 2012, the project will support a consultancy study to examine options and opportunities for the sustainable fiscal and programme operation of both PITIA and national fisheries associations.

In support of the coordinated assessment of enforcement and fisheries databases, the project IUU liaison officer, Bryan Scott, was able to undertake a number of country visits to initiate work on improved harmonisation of hardware and software systems between Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) agencies.

At FFA, the project has commenced a number of regional and national level initiatives. As a baseline for measuring project success, the project has supported the publication of the major 2011 FFA commissioned study on "Market and Industry Dynamics in the Global Tuna Supply Chain" (see article on p 23).

A comprehensive curriculum for the training of competent authority (CA) fisheries inspectors has been developed, and the first regional fisheries inspectors training course is scheduled for delivery in the first half of 2012.



The project is also providing assistance to five member countries in establishing the legal and organisational frameworks required for CA.

To assist with CA capacity building, terms of reference have been developed for an external audit of established CAs in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the Solomon Islands, with the first audits scheduled for the first half of 2012. This is intended to ensure readiness for an audit visit from the EU.

In support of industry compliance with CA standards, the project has facilitated HACCP¹ training for processing staff and vessel crews in Fiji, and sensory evaluation training for processing personnel at the Soltai cannery in the Solomon Islands. To ensure that FFA member country processing facilities are operating in compliance with social accountability standards, the project collaborated with the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) Office, PNG and the Marshall Islands to commission a programme for processing facility certification against the international SA8000 standard. The SA8000 standard is a global social accountability standard for decent working conditions, developed and overseen by Social Accountability International (SAI), which provides certification against international standards in relation to key aspects of employment relations, including child labour, forced labour, health and safety, freedom of association,

¹ HACCP = hazard analysis and critical control points

discrimination, disciplinary practices, working hours, remuneration and management systems. An SA8000 expert was commissioned to undertake processing facility against these standards and assist in setting up documentation systems in support of standards compliance. It is envisaged that the facilities included in the work will also become SA8000 certified in 2012.

In other more regional initiatives, a tender has recently been advertised for a study of regional transshipment with a view to enhancing potential economic benefits to members. This study will be completed by mid-2012. A contract has also been awarded for the preparation of a regional monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) training needs analysis covering all FFA members. This study will guide the future delivery of MCS training in support of coordinated national MCS strategies. The project is also supporting national initiatives for the coordinated implementation of information management systems. In support of IUU mitigation, an IUU specialist will provide services to members in IUU compliance and EU certification for domestic-registered vessels.

Also in support of MCS capacity building, the project has provided consultancy inputs into the ongoing development of the Pacific Island Regional Fisheries Observer (PIRFO) programme with the development of the Observer Debriefing qualification and training programme, the preparation of PIRFO training audit guidelines, and the development of the PIRFO trainer qualification.

A number of national level initiatives have also been implemented or are in the process of implementation.

In Fiji, assistance has been provided to the Fiji Tuna Boat Owners Association in undertaking the assessment process for MSC certification. Also in Fiji, but with potential implications for other counties involved in the southern albacore fishery, the project has assisted with the first phase of a study to mitigate whale depredation of tuna catches.

In Kiribati, the project is assisting with the establishment of a coordination office for the monitoring of mandatory crewing in the PNA purse-seine fishery.

In Samoa, a study has been commissioned to review economic performance in the small boat tuna longline fishery, and plans are under development for a study of small port development and an examination of alternative engine power options in the small vessel tuna fishery.

Following a project visit to Tonga, a tuna fishery investment strategy will be developed in 2012 and a similar activity is likely to take place in the Cook Islands. The project is also assisting the Cook Islands in considering options for the possible establishment of a liaison office in Pago Pago, American Samoa to provide services to Cook Islands-licensed vessels that use Pago Pago as a key port. This liaison function is also being considered in relation to a possible broader subregional function.

For the Marshall Islands, the project assisted with the publication of an investment promotion information kit to be made available to potential fisheries investors.

A series of country visits has been undertaken in PNG to assist with the preparation of a fisheries sector training, needs analysis study that was completed in October 2011 along with a draft policy on fisheries domestication.

While this is not a comprehensive summary of DEVFISH II activities, it does provide an indication of the range of actions that have been implemented to date.

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