

Oceanic Fisheries Programme

Draft Strategic Plan

2006–2008

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1. Introduction to the Oceanic Fisheries Programme and its strategic plan

This Strategic Plan maps out the direction of the Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP) for the period 2006 to 2008. The OFP provides scientific services relating to oceanic (primarily tuna) fisheries management. These services include fishery monitoring and data management, ecosystem and biological research relevant to the fisheries, and stock assessment and evaluation of management options. The most important programme outputs are information (e.g. reports on the status of fisheries, stocks and ecosystems), infrastructure (e.g. databases, monitoring programmes), advice (e.g. regarding appropriate levels of fishing), and national capacity building in Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs).

The OFP is part of the Marine Resources Division of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and is based in Noumea. It contributes to the Division's aim of helping achieve the vision of the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy: *"A healthy ocean that sustains the livelihoods and aspirations of Pacific Island communities"*. This vision is shared by all of the regional organisations working towards the achievement of ocean-related objectives in the region.

The aims of the OFP fall within an area that is defined not only by the expressed priorities and needs of member governments and administrations, but also by the functionality of other Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies and SPC programmes working on ocean issues. At the regional intergovernmental level:

- the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) addresses regional migratory fisheries (principally tuna) management objectives and supports member governments in international fisheries negotiations and domestic tuna fishery policy;
- the SPC Coastal Fisheries Programme's (CFP) Development Section addresses objectives that directly promote the economic role of Pacific Islanders in the regional tuna fishery (see CFP Strategic Plan);
- the SPC Regional Maritime Programme addresses objectives specifically relating to seafarers and shipping, including fishing seafarers;
- the South Pacific Applied Geosciences Commission addresses objectives in oceanography and marine minerals and generally covers the non-living ocean and coastal environment;
- the University of the South Pacific addresses ocean-related higher education objectives, academic ocean research and, where specific expertise is held, general provision of consultancy support for the objectives of other agencies;
- the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme addresses oceanic and coastal environmental management and protection objectives.

All of these agencies are part of the CROP Marine Sector Working Group, with observers of non-governmental organisations participating as appropriate.

The OFP has a special relationship with the FFA, which is detailed in an inter-organisational Memorandum of Understanding. The OFP provides a range of scientific support to the FFA, including data and analyses that provide the scientific basis for certain access negotiations and for specific fishery management initiatives.

A new non-CROP organisation that will have a major interaction with the work of the OFP is the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), which provides a mechanism for international cooperation in the management of fisheries for highly migratory species. It involves all SPC members as well as coastal and fishing states that are not SPC members. It has been agreed that the OFP will provide scientific services to the WCPFC in the areas of oceanic fisheries data management and stock assessment. This service provision is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding and annual service agreements.

This OFP Strategic Plan provides the Programme with a measurable, results-based focus that is intended to guide work programme activities over the 2006–2008 period. It is a “snapshot” of the current state of the evolving goals and objectives of the Programme, as benchmarked from time to time by consultation with member countries and reviews, particularly involving the SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting. While the WCPFC has no formal governance role regarding the OFP, it is expected that its Scientific Committee will also assist in guiding the work of the Programme, particularly that portion that comprises provision of services by the OFP to the WCPFC.

2. Pacific context and challenges

Tuna fishing in the Pacific Islands region has a rich history. For centuries, tuna have provided an important source of food for Pacific Island peoples and the traditional fishing techniques and equipment involved are part of their cultural heritage. Today, tuna are an important source of income and employment for PICTs. For many, the tuna resources within their EEZs represent their only significant renewable resource and their best opportunity for economic development. Currently, the catch of tuna in the region is about ten times that of all other types of fish combined. In terms of value, the tuna catch is worth over seven times the value of all other Pacific Island fish catches combined. PICTs have two main avenues to derive economic benefits from their tuna resources:

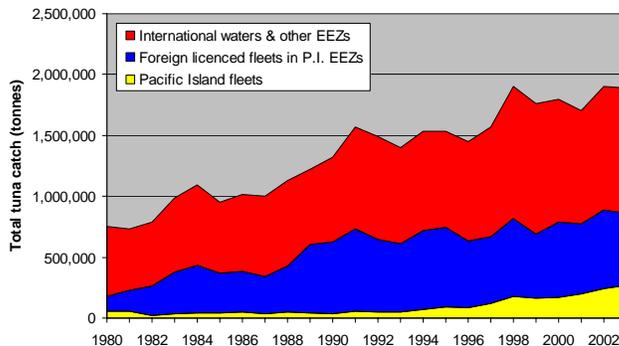


Figure 1. Tuna catches in the western and central Pacific Ocean

- Licensing of foreign-based fleets to fish in their EEZs in return for payment of access fees;
- The development of locally-based fishing fleets, in some cases accompanied by on-shore processing facilities, to exploit the tuna resources of their EEZs.

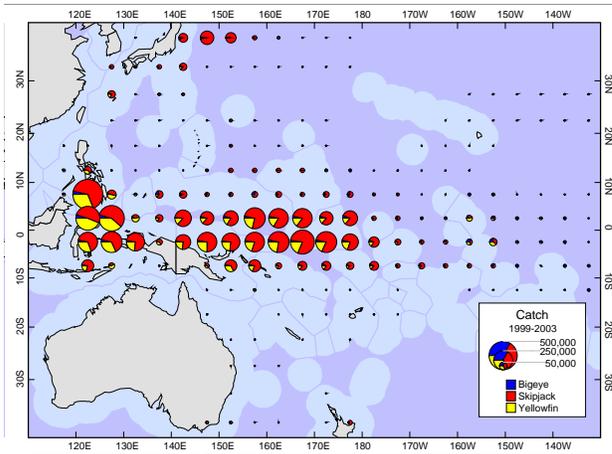


Figure 2. Purse seine and pole-and-line catches, 1999–2003 from the purse seine fishery, which provides tuna for canning in regional and Southeast Asian canneries. While the longline catch is smaller in total weight, its catch value is similar to that of the purse seine fishery — bigeye and yellowfin tuna are exported either fresh or frozen to lucrative *sashimi* markets in Japan and the US, while albacore are a premium “white meat” canned tuna product.

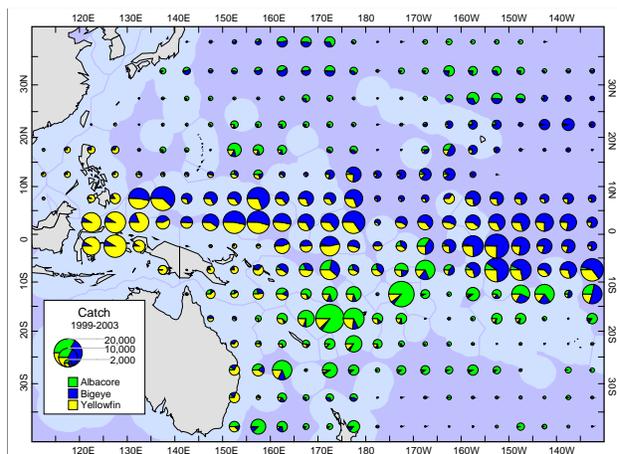


Figure 3. Longline catches, 1999–2003

Licensing of foreign fleets has occurred in many countries ever since the declaration of Economic Exclusive Zones (EEZ) in the late 1970s. Domestic fleet development is a more recent, but increasingly important part of the regional tuna fisheries landscape.

The fisheries target four main species — skipjack, yellowfin, bigeye and albacore tuna. The total annual catch in the western and central Pacific (west of 150°W) in recent years is approaching 2 million tonnes, approximately half of the total world tuna production, with a total catch value of around US\$2 billion. More than half of the catch is

tuna for canning in regional and Southeast Asian canneries. While the longline catch is smaller in total weight, its catch value is similar to that of the purse seine fishery — bigeye and yellowfin tuna are exported either fresh or frozen to lucrative *sashimi* markets in Japan and the US, while albacore are a premium “white meat” canned tuna product.

The purse seine fishery targets skipjack and yellowfin tuna, but records a small but important by-catch of bigeye tuna. The pole-and-line fishery targets mainly skipjack tuna with smaller catches of yellowfin tuna. Catches of these surface fisheries are concentrated in the equatorial Pacific, with small seasonal catches in sub-tropical waters. The longline fishery targets deeper-swimming adult bigeye and yellowfin tuna in the tropical Pacific and albacore in the sub-tropical South Pacific. Large catches of skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye tuna also occur in the domestic fisheries of Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam. The main gear types used are longline, purse seine and a range of small-scale fisheries catching mainly small, juvenile tuna.

Coastal states in the region have a duty to conserve the tuna resources that occur in their EEZs. There is thus an obligation under international law to manage the fisheries in their EEZs, be they domestic or foreign licensed operations, to avoid overexploitation of the resources. Management attention must be given both to target species, such as the tunas, and to non-target species. The latter potentially includes a wide range of species such as billfish and other piscivorous fishes, sharks, turtles, seabirds and marine mammals. Because these species have distributions spanning most of the tropical and subtropical Pacific, and have the capability to undertake large-scale movement within and beyond the region (as implied by the classification *highly migratory species*), coastal states are also required to cooperate amongst themselves and with states fishing on the high seas in the management and conservation of these resources. Members of the FFA cooperate with each other through the various management initiatives of that organisation. They have established minimum terms and conditions of access for foreign fleets seeking to fish in the region, which include, *inter alia*, obligations for data provision and observer coverage. They cooperate in the licensing of selected fishing fleets through multilateral treaties or agreements, e.g. the *US Treaty* (which involves multilateral licensing of US purse seiners) and the *FSM Arrangement* (which provides for preferential conditions of access for the national fleets of participating countries). They have also attempted to regulate fishing effort in the purse seine fishery through the *Palau Arrangement*, which first imposed a cap on the number of vessels allowed to fish, and more recently has implemented a vessel days scheme, whereby a total allowable level of purse seine effort and a scheme for allocating the effort to the EEZs of participating coastal states has been agreed. These management initiatives require scientific support by way of data processing and management, data summaries and analyses, stock assessments and advice on the effectiveness of potential management measures. The OFP provides this support, working in close collaboration with the FFA Secretariat.

In June 2004, the *Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean* (hereinafter referred to as the Tuna Convention, or more simply, the Convention) came into force. As at October 2005, all SPC members, with the exception of Palau, United States (and its territories) and Vanuatu had ratified the Convention. China, Chinese Taipei, the European Community, Japan, Korea and Philippines have also ratified or acceded to the Convention. The Convention has established the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission as its implementing organ. The Commission, based in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, held its first meeting in December 2004. Its Scientific Committee met at SPC Headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia, in August 2005.

The WCPFC is the principal vehicle through which coastal states and fishing states are to cooperate in fisheries management. Currently, it is not planned to develop a comprehensive scientific capability within the WCPFC Secretariat. Consequently, the WCPFC has requested, and SPC has agreed, that the OFP provide scientific services to the WCPFC in the areas of data management and stock assessment. The relationship between the OFP and the WCPFC is therefore an integral part of this Strategic Plan.

Within this overall context, the greatest challenges facing the region within the area of competence of the OFP are outlined below:

- Pacific Community members, both individually and collectively, must have access to accurate and comprehensive scientific data on regional oceanic fisheries, and to high-quality scientific information and advice on the stocks that are targeted or otherwise impacted by those fisheries. PICTs need this information and data to discharge their responsibilities for the management of fisheries in their EEZs, and to cooperate within the WCPFC and FFA frameworks in regional oceanic fisheries management.
- Improved understanding of the broader pelagic ecosystem that sustains these fisheries is needed to support new attempts to manage fisheries on a more holistic ecosystem basis.
- Cutting across both of these issues is the challenge of developing and retaining human resources in-country to monitor fisheries, manage data, provide technical support to fisheries management and participate meaningfully in regional management discussions.

3. SPC's response

The OFP has been addressing these challenges through its work programme over many years. The work programme has continuously evolved to meet the demands of changes in fisheries and the apparent status of stocks, and the evolution of international best practice in fisheries science and management. The strategic plan for 2003–2005 addressed three priorities — providing scientific support for tuna fisheries management, providing and improving data and tuna fishery monitoring services, and improving our understanding of the pelagic ecosystem that supports oceanic fisheries. These priorities continue to be relevant and will continue to be a focus for the OFP's work during 2006–2008. Programme directions over the next three years are therefore expected to largely follow and build upon the work undertaken in 2003–2005.

While the content of the 2006–2008 Strategic Plan is similar to that of the previous plan, the advent of the WCPFC will see some changes in emphasis related to OFP-WCPFC interaction. First, the OFP will provide scientific services in data management and stock assessment directly to the WCPFC during this period. This is work that the OFP has, to a large extent, been carrying out over a number of years, and which has laid considerable groundwork for the WCPFC. This new service provision is detailed in an inter-organisational Memorandum of Understanding and annual service agreements, which include details of the services to be provided and the funding arrangements. The second type of interaction stems from the need for the OFP to assist PICTs to meet their new obligations to, and facilitate their participation in, the WCPFC. The Programme's work in regional stock assessment and data management, and its delivery of scientific advice and fishery monitoring support to PICTs, will be designed around meeting these new needs.

4. Priorities

The top priority of the region, within the OFP area of competence, is to manage fisheries for migratory species in the Pacific Islands region to ensure economic and ecological sustainability in accordance with standards set by regional and international agreements. Under the Convention on the Law of the Sea, and elaborated in the new Tuna Convention, any management action for highly migratory species must be based on the best available science. SPC members have steered the OFP towards improving the region's capacity to provide the best science globally available on regional oceanic stocks.

This overall programme priority includes the following more detailed priorities within the areas of challenge identified earlier:

- Provision of high-quality scientific information and advice on the status of stocks and the impacts of fisheries for regional and national fisheries management;
- Provision of accurate and comprehensive scientific data for national and regional fisheries management;
- Improved understanding of pelagic ecosystems in the western and central Pacific, supporting the incorporation of ecosystem considerations into national and regional fisheries management;
- As a cross-cutting priority, the building of national capacity to monitor fisheries, manage data, provide technical support to fisheries management and participate meaningfully in regional management discussions.

5. Goal and objectives

The Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy articulates a regionally shared vision of “A healthy ocean that sustains the livelihoods and aspirations of Pacific Island communities”. To contribute to the achievement of this vision, the goal of the SPC Oceanic Fisheries Programme is that **fisheries exploiting the region's resources of tuna, billfish and related species are managed for economic and ecological sustainability using the best available scientific information.**

To help Pacific Community members achieve this goal, the OFP will focus on three objectives for the three-year period from 2006 to 2008:

- High-quality scientific information and advice for regional and national fisheries management authorities on the status of, and fishery impacts on, stocks targeted or otherwise impacted by regional oceanic fisheries.
- Accurate and comprehensive scientific data for regional and national fisheries management authorities on fisheries targeting the region's resources of tuna, billfish and other oceanic species.

- Improved understanding of pelagic ecosystems in the western and central Pacific Ocean, with a focus on the western tropical Pacific.

6. Outputs and key performance indicators

The following does not provide a detailed work-plan but rather summarises generic or key activities, and provides the top-level aggregate indicator(s) used in broadly measuring achievement towards each objective. (A detailed plan containing all activities will be produced annually for each section under each objective outlined here.)

Objective 1 – High-quality scientific information and advice for regional and national fisheries management authorities on the status of, and fishery impacts on, stocks targeted or otherwise impacted by regional oceanic fisheries

This objective is pursued by the OFP's Stock Assessment & Modelling Section. In producing the outputs described below it also draws on the outputs of the other two OFP objectives — the data compiled by the Statistics & Monitoring Section and the understanding of basic ecosystem and biological processes generated by the Biology & Ecology Section.

Output 1.1: Regional stock assessments and associated analyses

This output is the culmination of a range of activities involving the development of stock assessment methodology and associated computer software, assembling and verifying data used in the assessments, estimating the parameters of the models based on the data and other information and interpreting the model results to provide fishery management advice. The key performance indicator is the production and presentation of stock assessment reports to the WCPFC and its Scientific Committee, various meetings of the FFA, and meetings of the SPC Heads of Fisheries. Since the assessments will be provided as part of a package of services to the WCPFC, their quality will be verified by regular peer review.

Output 1.2: National fishery status reports (NFSR) and associated analyses

This output is the principal vehicle by which scientific information and advice is delivered at the national level. NFSRs are comprehensive reports that describe the fisheries and physical characteristics of the EEZ, and analyse the performance of fisheries in relation to regional stock status, environmental influences and local fishery conditions. The reports are tailored to the requirements of the country concerned, and may, if requested, provide specific advice on appropriate levels of fishing in the EEZ. NFSRs are typically presented at in-country workshops and briefing sessions to promote local uptake of the findings. The involvement of national counterparts in the production of the reports is also encouraged as a capacity building exercise. The key performance indicator is the production and presentation of NFSRs.

Output 1.3: Enhanced capacity of PICTs to interpret stock assessment information and advice

This output, which addresses a long-term need of PICTs, is a result of involvement of national fisheries staff in output 1.2, as well as dedicated activities such as regional workshops on stock assessment methods and interpretation. Performance data will be difficult to compile. However, indicators of success would be that NFSRs influence national fisheries management decisions and the quality of PICT participation in WCPFC processes is improved.

Objective 2 – Accurate and comprehensive scientific data for regional and national fisheries management authorities on fisheries targeting the region’s resources of tuna, billfish and other oceanic species

This objective is pursued by the OFP’s Statistics & Monitoring Section. It provides the fundamental basis for the Programme’s assessments of oceanic species, as well as providing direct outputs essential to national and international oceanic fisheries management. The objective incorporates regional data management services provided by the Programme to the WCPFC.

Output 2.1: Regional oceanic fishery data management services provided to the WCPFC

The OFP has a long history of compiling and managing regional oceanic fisheries data provided by PICTs and fishing nations. The data include operational level catch and effort data provided on daily logs, sampling data collected in port and by scientific observers at sea, and catch and effort data aggregated by area-time strata. The range of activities supporting this output include data entry, database software development and maintenance, coordination and quality control of data collection, data dissemination at appropriate levels of resolution in accordance with policies on data confidentiality, and the production of statistical bulletins, data summaries and data products. As this output is governed by a WCPFC service agreement, the key performance indicator will be the fulfilment of the terms of reference of that agreement and its annual renewal.

Output 2.2: Enhanced national fishery monitoring and data management systems

The development and enhancement of national fishery monitoring and database systems has long been the core business of the OFP. This output encompasses the implementation of customised national fishery monitoring systems covering logsheet data collection, unloadings and vessel activity data collection, observer and port sampling programmes, the development and maintenance of national database systems, data processing assistance and data quality assessment. These activities involve extensive in-country work in systems development, review and maintenance, and training of national staff. As this output is focused on enabling countries to meet both their data provision obligations to the WCPFC and their own domestic fishery management requirements, the key performance indicators are that these obligations and requirements are met.

Output 2.3: Enhanced capacity of PICTs to monitor fisheries, manage and use data

This output is a result of involvement of national staff in output 2.2. The output is achieved by a range of training activities, including regional workshops in fishery monitoring, observer and port sampling training courses, attachment training of national fisheries statistics staff at SPC headquarters, and in-country training in the use of database systems. The achievement of this output will be important for the long-term sustainability of national fishery monitoring systems and its success will ultimately be measured in these terms.

Objective 3 – Improved understanding of pelagic ecosystems in the western and central Pacific Ocean, with a focus on the western tropical Pacific

This objective is pursued by the OFP's Biology & Ecology Section, which undertakes research on the biology of selected tuna and by-catch species, and on the ecosystem in which they live. Information on tuna biology, such as age and growth and vertical habitat utilisation, is incorporated directly into regional tuna stock assessments. As assessments for important by-catch species are developed, similar biological information will also be required for these species. The nature and impacts of ocean climate variability on tuna fisheries are also a focus of the section's work, with modelling techniques used to integrate basin-scale observations and models of physical and biological oceanography with the biology and physiology of tunas. Research is also underway to characterise and model the western tropical Pacific warm pool ecosystem in a holistic way, focusing on defining the trophic relationships among the broad assemblage of pelagic species inhabiting the system. Work during this three-year period will include examining the significance of seamounts as a habitat of special importance in the pelagic ecosystem.

Output 3.1: Data on the biological characteristics of oceanic species and their environment

This output encompasses a range of research or data-gathering activities that provide information for either single-species assessments or ecosystem monitoring. A particular focus will be on the collection of information on trophic relationships in the pelagic ecosystem. These relationships will, to a large extent, govern the qualitative and quantitative response of the overall ecosystem to the removal by fisheries of target species, which are usually the larger predators, from the upper trophic levels. Our ability to understand and predict such fishery impacts will be critically dependent on an understanding of these trophic relationships and their variability.

Tuna tagging will be critical to the achievement of this output. In recent years, successive regional scientific fora have noted the need for a new large-scale tagging project for tropical tunas in this region. The importance of this work was again raised at the 2005 WCPFC Scientific Committee meeting in the context of providing important information on current levels of exploitation, as well as information on stock structure and mixing rates of tropical tunas. The OFP has been at the forefront in implementing previous large-scale tagging programmes and is likely to be so again.

The proliferation of fish aggregation devices (FADs) in the purse seine fishery over the past ten years will likely see a special focus on FADs in any new tagging project. Renewed attempts will be made to secure the necessary funding support for a large-scale tagging project. The funding required will be considerable, in the region of USD 5 million for a full-scale project, largely due to the need to charter a full-time pole-and-line vessel as the principal tagging platform. The effectiveness of this approach, and the failure of its alternative (opportunistic tagging on board commercial vessels), is a key lesson learnt from previous OFP work.

Seamounts are habitats of considerable international interest. They will be investigated in the context of both trophic ecology and tagging activities in order to provide specific management advice as to their ecological significance and impacts on pelagic species and fisheries.

A key performance indicator for this output will be improvement of single-species assessments and ecosystem models resulting from the new data collected. Additionally, the quality of the scientific information produced will be measured by publication of results in the peer-reviewed scientific literature and by the WCPFC Scientific Committee's review of the work.

Output 3.2: Improved ecosystem models that incorporate available data

Ecosystem models have the potential to enable better understanding of the dynamics of the interaction between large predators such as tuna, their forage, and their biological and physical environment. The main approach taken by the OFP to date has been the development of a Spatial Environmental and Population Dynamics Model (SEAPODYM), which integrates information on Pacific basin-scale oceanography and productivity with data on the fisheries and population dynamics of the target species. The model shows considerable promise for understanding the mechanisms that drive the variability in tuna stocks and fisheries. Ultimately, it is hoped that the model will be useful in addressing a number of important management questions (see output 3.3). This work will be continued as a key activity of the 2006–2008 period and will involve substantial international collaboration through CLIOTOP (Climatic Impacts on Top Predators Programme).

An additional approach to be investigated involves the development of energy-transfer models utilising the trophic information being collected under output 3.1. As a first step, existing models (ECOPATH/ECOSIM) are being trialled; however, it may be desirable to develop a new, more statistically rigorous approach to ecosystem modelling in the longer term. This work will continue to involve substantial international collaboration.

The key performance indicators for this output will be publication of analyses in the peer-reviewed literature and production of working papers for the WCPFC Scientific Committee.

Output 3.3: Scientific advice on ecosystem-based management options using available models and data

This output represents the packaging of the research data and analyses produced in outputs 3.1 and 3.2 to provide specific advice to PICTs, FFA and the WCPFC on ecosystem-based management options. The types of activities envisaged include advice on fishery impacts on important non-target species or species groups, advice on management options with respect to habitats of special concern such as seamounts, advice on the efficacy of specific ecosystem management measures such as marine protected areas and advice on the possible impacts of long-term climate change on oceanic fish stocks and fisheries.

The key performance indicators for this output will be publication of analyses in the peer-reviewed literature, production of working papers for the WCPFC Scientific Committee and FFA meetings, and the incorporation of advice on ecosystem-based management options in National Fishery Status Reports.

7. Reporting, monitoring and evaluation

The work of the OFP sections is co-ordinated by the Oceanic Fisheries Programme Manager, who meets regularly with the Divisional Director and is an observer on the Coastal Fisheries Coordinating Committee. Staff of individual sections meet as required by section heads for the purpose of programming annual workplans and monitoring progress against action items. The SPC Executive Committee reviews a budgetary overview on a monthly basis. Annual programme progress reports and workplans are provided to the Divisional Director and to donors. More frequent (six-monthly or quarterly) progress reports are required for certain projects. The OFP publishes reports of current work in a variety of publications, including the quarterly SPC Fisheries Newsletter, Policy Briefs, annual Tuna Fishery Assessment Reports, annual Tuna Fishery Yearbooks and biannual Tuna Bulletins. The results of projects are also published as Technical Reports or in the peer-reviewed scientific literature. Most publications are available on the SPC website (www.spc.int/OceanFish). Monitoring of general collaborative work with other CROP agencies is carried out within the Marine Sector Working Group (usually twice a year), and at a more technical level during occasional inter-agency colloquia (annually in the case of FFA). All country-specific activities that involve expenditure on staff travel or consultancy are subject to a formal process of request or approval through SPC's "official contact" for that country or territory.

The annual or biennial Heads of Fisheries (HoF) meeting monitors and evaluates the OFP annual work programme and provides a regional consensus on changing priorities within the living aquatic resources sector. HoF also reviews and guides strategic plans. An overview of the programme's performance against the strategic plan is also included in the annual Marine Resources Division report to SPC's Governing Body, the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA). The scientific work of the programme is presented and thoroughly discussed at annual meetings of the Scientific Committee of the WCPFC, for which the OFP co-ordinates technical advice and collaboration. Independent reviewers evaluate the programme every few years as part of the Division's review programme, whilst individual projects and sections are reviewed as provided for in work plans.

8. Partnerships and resources

The OFP is part of the Marine Resources Division of SPC and is located in Noumea, but manages or oversees field-based staff on local terms in several countries. It shares a common vision with the Coastal Fisheries Programme and the marine-related programmes of other agencies collaborating within the CROP Marine Sector Working Group.

The Programme also collaborates with FAO, the University of Hawaii, the US Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council and other CROP regional organisations. It maintains working relationships with other regional and national fisheries management and science bodies, in particular the WCPFC, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, the US National Marine Fisheries Service, the Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, the New Zealand Ministry of Fisheries and National Institute of Water and Atmosphere, and the Japan National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries.

The Programme currently has 24 staff, of whom 8 are locally recruited technicians or administrators and 16 are internationally recruited experts. In addition, 2 fishery monitoring staff (for New Caledonia and French Polynesia) are attached to the Programme.

Over the 2003–2005 period, OFP financial resources averaged approximately 300,000,000 CFP per year, with major contributions from the SPC core budget, programme funding (Australia, France and New Zealand), the European Commission (EC) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). A significant proportion of this amount was due to two large projects, the Oceanic Fisheries Management Component of the International Waters Programme, funded by the GEF, and the PROCFish project (Pacific Regional Oceanic and Coastal Fisheries project), funded by the European Commission.

Both of these projects have ended, or will end early in this Strategic Plan period. Both projects have provided significant resources for fishery monitoring, including national capacity building, and ecosystem modelling and research. A new five-year GEF project (the Pacific Oceanic Fisheries Management Project) began in late 2005. This project, coupled with new funding support for work undertaken on behalf of the WCPFC, should see overall programme funding resources remain reasonably stable through the next three years. It is, however, hoped that a new EC-funded project will be developed during this period.

Special mention should be made of the new relationship developing between the OFP and the WCPFC in the context of programme resourcing. The SPC membership has authorised the OFP to provide scientific services to the WCPFC in the areas of data management and stock assessment on the condition that such services be adequately funded and do not detract from the services provided to PICTs at the national level. With this in mind, it was agreed that services would be initially provided on an incremental funding basis, i.e. that WCPFC would pay for any additional work undertaken by the OFP on its behalf. This effectively means that the WCPFC would obtain that part of the OFP work programme that overlaps with their service needs for free. Thus, SPC would be subsidising WCPFC operations to some extent. It was agreed that this was appropriate, at least while a large proportion of WCPFC members were also SPC members. However, there was also an acknowledgement that when the larger fishing nations, such as Japan, Korea, China and Taiwan, who are not SPC members, joined the WCPFC, the case for continuing this subsidisation would be much weaker. At that point, the WCPFC might be expected to bear a greater share of the cost of the overall services, including the area of historical overlap.

The initial annual funding support that was requested from the WCPFC was USD 254,510. This was proposed and accepted on the basis that OFP would need two new scientific positions to cover the incremental increase in work. Now that most of the larger fishing nations (Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China and Philippines) are in fact WCPFC members, it is appropriate to consider re-negotiating the funding basis, or agreeing to a planned increase in support from the WCPFC. This negotiation will need to involve SPC members, particularly our programme funding donors.

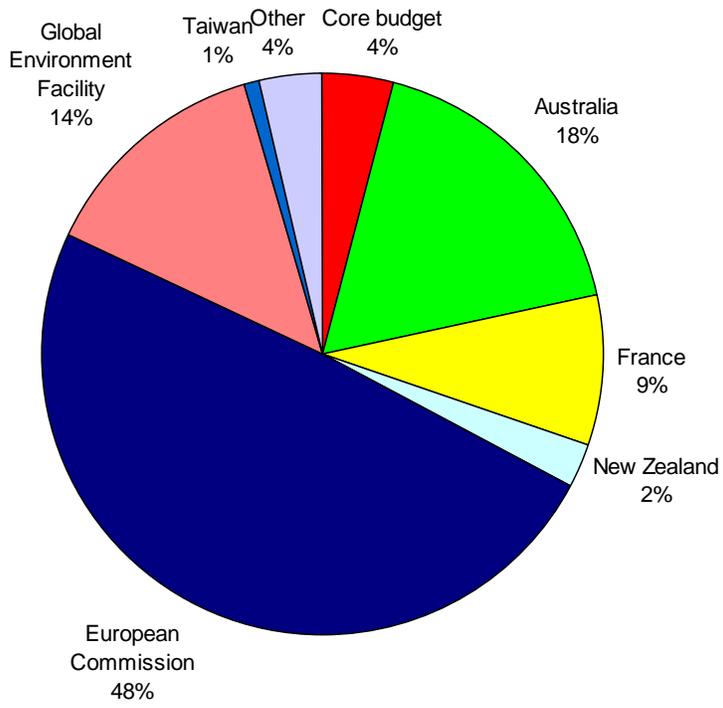


Figure 4. OFP funding 2003-2005.

9. Summary matrix

Objectives and Outputs	Key Performance Indicators
Objective 1: High-quality scientific information and advice for regional and national fisheries management authorities on the status of, and fishery impacts on, stocks targeted or otherwise impacted by regional oceanic fisheries	
Output 1.1 Regional stock assessments and associated analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 regional assessments per year that are used to inform management decision-making at the regional level
Output 1.2 National fishery status reports and associated analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 fishery status reports per year that are used to inform management decision-making at the national level
Output 1.3 Enhanced capacity of PICTs to interpret stock assessment information and advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved uptake of OFP work at the national level • Improved quality of PICT participation in WCPFC
Objective 2: Accurate and comprehensive scientific data for regional and national fisheries management authorities on fisheries targeting the region's resources of tuna, billfish and other oceanic species	
Output 2.1 Regional oceanic fishery data management services provided to the WCPFC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of WCPFC service agreement fulfilled and agreement renewed • Coverage of fishing activity by various data types improves towards WCPFC standards • Publication schedules met • All data requests processed according to established procedures
Output 2.2 Enhanced national fishery monitoring and data management systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PICTs meet WCPFC reporting requirements and national fisheries management objectives • Coverage of national fishing activity by various data types improves towards WCPFC standards
Output 2.3 Enhanced capacity of PICTs to monitor fisheries, manage and use data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of trained observers and port samplers • Number of attachments and regional workshops • Fishery monitoring systems functional without OFP support
Objective 3: Improved understanding of pelagic ecosystems in the western and central Pacific Ocean, with a focus on the western tropical Pacific	
Output 3.1 Data on the biological characteristics of oceanic species and their environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific papers and working papers submitted to WCPFC Scientific Committee • Improvement in single-species assessment and ecosystem models
Output 3.2 Improved ecosystem models that incorporate available data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific papers and working papers submitted to WCPFC Scientific Committee
Output 3.3 Scientific advice on ecosystem-based management options using available models and data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice provided to WCPFC Scientific Committee, FFA and PICTs