

Report of the Meeting on Aligning MSC Principle 1 Activities of FIP and MSC Client Action Plans for Fisheries for Albacore, Bigeye and Yellowfin Tunas in the WCPFC Convention Area

21 May 2014 8:30-9:45am, Philippines Room, Shangri-La Hotel Bangkok

1. The twenty-eight meeting participants included Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) client groups and participants of Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) for fisheries for albacore, bigeye and yellowfin tunas in the Convention Area of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), and other stakeholders.
2. Report appendices 1-4 contain the meeting agenda, list of FIPs and fisheries in the MSC program that are within the scope of this meeting and initiative, list of and links to background materials distributed to participants prior to and following the meeting, and a list of meeting participants, respectively.
3. The meeting participants reviewed the agenda and the target meeting outcome. Given the short period of time allotted for the meeting, participants were requested to keep the discussion focused on the scope of the agreed meeting objective. The target meeting outcome was to: "Initiate discussions between relevant MSC client groups and participants of FIPs to coordinate and align policy activities related to sub-regional and regional management of fisheries for albacore, bigeye and yellowfin tunas in the Convention Area of the WCPFC."
An additional desired role for the proposed group identified during discussion was for the dissemination of relevant information on FFA, PNA, WCPFC and information on other regional and sub-regional tuna management initiatives.
Hereafter in this meeting report the group proposed to be established for this initiative is referred to as the, "WCPO Tuna MSC Principle 1 Alignment Group".
Thus, the revised broader purpose for the group is summarized as: "Disseminate information, and coordinate and align policy activities of relevant MSC client groups and participants of FIPs related to sub-regional and regional management of fisheries for albacore, bigeye and yellowfin tunas in the Convention Area of the WCPFC."
4. A list of people who had confirmed they would attend the meeting was reviewed, and attendees not included on the list were identified and introduced. It was highlighted that, of the FIPs and MSC client groups identified as being within the scope of the meeting and proposed initiative, Walker Seafood Australia and the Fiji Tuna Boat Owners Association (FTBOA) were not represented. FTBOA contributed a background paper for the meeting identifying their MSC principle 1 activities of their client action plan, and prior to the meeting expressed FTBOA's interest to be a part of the group involved in the proposed initiative to coordinate and align MSC principle 1 – related activities.
5. The group reviewed a table summarizing the MSC principle 1 activities identified in the Action Plans for FIPs and MSC client action plans. There was substantial overlap of activities across the action plans for three MSC principle 1 performance indicators. These are: (i) Performance Indicator 1.1.2 with activities related to promoting the adoption of target reference points (TRP) that maintains the stock at a level consistent w/ B_{MSY} or similar target biological reference point (BRP) and accounts for precautionary issues such as ecological role; (ii) Performance Indicator 1.2.1, with activities related to promoting the adoption of a harvest strategy that is responsive to the state of the stock

and achieves management objectives reflected in BRPs, system in place to assess efficacy, and there's evidence the harvest strategy is achieving objectives, and there is no shark finning; and (iii) Performance Indicator 1.2.2 with activities related to promoting the adoption of a harvest control rule (HCR) and tools consistent with the harvest strategy, reduces fishing mortality as a limit biological reference point is approached, accounts for uncertainty, and there's evidence that the tools are effectively achieving exploitation level required by the HCR.

Related to performance indicator 1.1.2, the FIPs that include WCPO bigeye and yellowfin include actions to bring bigeye fishing mortality to at or below Fmsy. WCPFC has adopted LRPs for BET, YFN, and SP albacore, and the WCPFC Northern Committee adopted an interim LRP for NP albacore – but formal TRPs are needed for these 4 stocks. None of the four stocks are depleted, hence the lack of activities under MSC performance indicator 1.1.3 on stock rebuilding. The three FIPs that include bigeye include activities under performance indicator 1.1.1, stock status, aimed at getting the stock to a level where it maintains high productivity and has a low probability of recruitment overfishing, at or around TRP. A description of the status of the four tuna stocks under the meeting scope is included in the background document, “Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Decision-making Processes and Management Frameworks for Stocks of Tuna and Tuna-like Species” (Appendix 3). The Indonesia tuna FIP action plan includes activities that fall under Performance Indicators 1.2.3 and 1.2.4, related to improving information on stock structure, productivity, abundance, and fleet composition in order to support the harvest strategy, and to augment the monitoring level and frequency, and to improve stock assessments.

Upon reviewing the summary slide and the content of the background report providing a summary of FIP and MSC action plan P1 activities (Appendix 3), a participant commented that it would be useful to conduct a more in-depth review of the specific activities identified in FIP action plans and client action plans of MSC certification reports to identify overlap in the specific planned and in-progress activities.

6. Ben Ponia, Cook Islands Ministry of Marine Resources, provided a presentation describing the Cook Islands' current domestic tuna management framework and new measures being considered. This included a review of recent effort and catch; monitoring, control and surveillance; and a proposed new quota management system.

Mr. Ponia also described the, “*Tokelau Arrangement for the Management of the South Pacific Longline Fishery*,” which was discussed at the recent Forum Fisheries Committee meeting, and has been proposed to be opened for signature at their July 2014 meeting.

7. The background materials on Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) and WCPFC management systems, the two science provider fishery bodies (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, SPC, and International Scientific Committee, ISC) and status of the four tuna stocks under the scope of the group, distributed to participants prior to the meeting, were briefly reviewed. The coordinator summarized the regional and sub-regional mgmt. systems. The PNA purse-seine vessel day scheme is fully operational and the FFA Sub-Committee on South Pacific Tuna and Billfish Fisheries' southern albacore longline harvest strategy is probably close to agreement, especially if FFA is willing to adopt sub-regional management with a subset of members. The south Pacific sub-committee's current focus is on SP albacore and not mgmt of longline bigeye/yellowfin fisheries, but perhaps their attention will turn to bigeye and yellowfin once a framework for albacore is in place. The PNA longline vessel-days scheme is under development, but might not be adopted

for several years unless they implement it with only a sub-group of countries. WCPFC controls for longline fisheries is through BET TACs for non-SIDS, freeze YFN catch levels, and caps N and S Pacific albacore LL effort at specified historical level in the full convention area for N. Pacific albacore and south of 20°S for S. Pacific albacore.

Participants discussed guidance on the duration of FIPs. SFP and WWF described their guidance, and identified the 2006 Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions guidance on FIPs as the basis for their guidance. Discussion on the duration of WCPO FIPs for bigeye was raised, given that it is currently unlikely that fisheries targeting this stock would pass an assessment against the MSC standard, and that the P1 deficiencies preventing passing the standard are not likely to change for at least several years.

Participants discussed whether the New Zealand troll S. Pacific albacore fishery is likely to pass the fisheries' upcoming 5-year re-assessment, given that principle 1 conditions of certification have not been met. The discussion included two interpretations of how the MSC standard addresses this situation, and general discussion about the reasonability of including conditions of certification under principle 1 that are within the control of the client group.

8. The participants reviewed a tentative list of activities to augment compliance with existing regional and sub-regional measures (Appendix 3).

A participant raised the issue that subsidies by China and possibly other WCPFC Member States is understood to be contributing to overcapacity in the WCPO longline south Pacific albacore fishery. A participant replied that, in SIDS' longline fisheries that occur primarily in their EEZ waters, and that have limited-entry measures in place, subsidies do not likely have an effect on capacity and thus are not a perverse incentive for overcapacity, but the lack of input limits in some high seas areas of the WCPFC convention area could be a problem contributing to *economic* overcapacity (but noting that the south Pacific albacore stock remains within MSY-based BRPs).

A participant described trials of electronic monitoring (EM) systems for purse seine and longline vessels, identifying EM as a potential way to complement existing human onboard observers and increase data quality, and augment onboard observer coverage rates. ISSF described several EM trials in purse seine and longline fisheries, including on vessels in the WCPO. Tri Marine described an ongoing trial in the Solomon Islands fishery, for which results will be reported at the next WCPFC Scientific Committee meeting.

A participant commented that while most FIP and MSC action plan P1 activities focus on filling gaps in regional management by having bodies adopt adequate BRPs, harvest strategies and HCRs, given the poor compliance with existing measures under WCPFC, adopting additional conservation and management measures alone likely will not be an effective approach to improve regional tuna governance.

9. The participants reviewed a tentative list of activities to address MSC principle 1 deficits with the FFA, PNA and WCPFC management frameworks (Appendix 3).

One suggestion to improve the effectiveness of principle 1 activities was to identify delegations that are preventing the adoption of needed measures to address deficits in management systems of FFA, PNA and WCPFC. To accomplish this, the WCPO Tuna MSC Principle 1 Alignment Group could track and disseminate information on : (i) written positions submitted by delegations, (ii) delegation negotiating positions during meetings, and (iii) delegation voting records.

As a follow-up to this agenda item, after the meeting, Rob Tilney (TMA of New Zealand) proposed to prepare a letter for co-signature by the leads of relevant fisheries

in the MSC program and FIPs, to be sent to the WCPFC Secretariat requesting that management options (target reference point, harvest strategy, HCR based on the BRPs and harvest strategy) for south Pacific albacore be included on the agendas of the WCPFC's planned third Management Options Workshop and the 2014 Scientific Committee. The draft agenda for the MOP3 does not include s. Pacific albacore.

10. The group was asked to express their interest to participate in the proposed WCPO Tuna MSC P1 Alignment Group, to coordinate and align activities at FFA, PNA and WCPFC by the relevant FIP participants and MSC client groups. A subset of the groups (Luen Thai Fishing Venture, Tri Marine, WWF, SFP) expressed their interest during the meeting, and the remainder (AAFA, Anova, Norpac, Tuna Management Association of New Zealand) expressed their interest to the meeting coordinator after the meeting concluded.

11. The meeting coordinator proposed continuing facilitating the group's communication and dissemination of relevant information via email and by posting relevant materials to the WCPO Tuna MSC P1 Alignment Group's website, <https://sites.google.com/site/seafoodcompaniestunamanagement/home/21-may-2014-meeting-FIP-MS-C-Aligning-P1>. Some participants expressed support for the proposal, and no objections were raised.

The following additional materials of relevance to the WCPO Tuna MSC Principle 1 Alignment Group have been posted to the WCPO Tuna MSC P1 Alignment Group's website as a follow-up to discussions held at the meeting: *Tokelau Arrangement for the Management of the South Pacific Longline Fishery*, *WWF Western Central Pacific Tuna Conservation Pledge*, *WWF's Position on Fisheries in Transition*; article on open access to information on compliance with WCPFC obligations (Appendix 3).

Options discussed for a 2nd in-person meeting were as side meetings at the Seafood Summit in February 2015, or the Seafood Expo North American in Boston in March 2015.

Appendix 1: Agenda

- Review agenda, meeting purpose (5 minutes)
 - Introductions and identify stakeholders implementing P1 activities (10 minutes)
 - Identify overlap in MSC P1 activities of WCPO FIP and MSC Action Plans (10 minutes)
 - Aligning domestic tuna fishery mgmt. plans (Ben Ponia, Cook Islands Ministry of Marine Resources (10 minutes))
 - Opportunities for coordinating activities at regional & sub-regional bodies (25 minutes)
 - FFA
 - PNA
 - WCPFC
 - Next Steps, Closing (15 minutes)
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Appendix 2: Relevant FIPs and Fisheries in the MSC Program

The following is a list of FIPs and fisheries in the MSC program for albacore, bigeye and yellowfin tunas in the Convention Area of the WCPFC.

WCPO Longline Fishery Improvement Projects

- Cook Islands longline south Pacific albacore – Anova and Luen Thai Fishing Venture (point of contact: Helen Packer, Anova Fishing & Living Program)
- Federated States of Micronesia longline bigeye/yellowfin tuna – Luen Thai Fishing Venture (point of contact: Eric Gilman, Luen Thai Fishing Venture)
- Indonesia handline, pole-and-line, troll, longline, purse seine, gillnet bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack tunas – WWF (point of contact: Habib Abdullah, WWF)
- Marshall Islands longline bigeye/yellowfin - Norpac Fisheries Export and Luen Thai Fishing Venture (point of contact: Thomas Kraft, Norpac Fisheries Export)
- Solomon Islands longline albacore and incidental market species – Tri Marine (point of contact: Matt Owens, Tri Marine)
- Vietnam handline and longline bigeye and yellowfin tuna – WWF

N&S Pacific Albacore and WCPO Bigeye & Yellowfin MSC Certified & in Full Assessment

- American Albacore Fisheries Association – pole and troll N and S Pacific albacore fishery (certified) and American Western Fish Boat Owners Association, N and S Pacific albacore troll, jig, pole (certified) (WFOA and AAFA have merged their two certificates) (points of contact: Wayne Heikkila, WFOA, and Natalie Webster, AAFA)
- Fiji Tuna Boat Owners Association, Fiji longline S Pacific albacore (certified) (point of contact: Radhika Kumar, FTBOA)
- Luen Thai Fishing Venture, Cook Islands longline S Pacific albacore (in assessment) (point of contact: Eric Gilman, Luen Thai Fishing Venture)
- Tuna Management Association of New Zealand, New Zealand troll S. Pacific albacore (certified) (points of contact: Rob Tilney and Doug Loder, TMA)
- Walker Seafood Australia, longline S Pacific albacore, WCPO yellowfin, S Pacific swordfish, mahi mahi (in assessment) (point of contact: Heidi Walker, Walker Seafood Australia)

Appendix 3: Background Materials

The following background documents were distributed in advance of the meeting, and are available online at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/seafoodcompaniestunamanagement/home/21-may-2014-meeting-FIP-MSC-Aligning-P1>:

- MSC Principle 1 Activities of FIPs and MSC Client Groups: Materials describing regional-level (MSC principle 1) activities of Action Plans of MSC certified fisheries and FIPs for fisheries in the WCPFC Convention Area for north and south Pacific Ocean albacore and western and central Pacific Ocean bigeye and yellowfin tunas.
 - Cook Islands FIP P1 activities summary [DOWNLOAD](#)
 - Marshall Islands FIP P1 activities summary [DOWNLOAD](#)
 - New Zealand TMA MSC Client Action Plan P1 activities summary [DOWNLOAD](#)
 - Fiji FTBOA MSC Client Action Plan P1 activities summary [DOWNLOAD](#)
 - Summary of FIP and MSC action plan P1 activities [DOWNLOAD](#)
- Summary of decision-making processes and management systems of relevant sub-regional and regional tuna fishery management bodies: Summary document for PNA, FFA and WCPFC decision-making processes and tuna fishery management frameworks.
 - PNA, FFA, SPC, ISC [DOWNLOAD](#)
 - WCPFC [DOWNLOAD](#)
- Draft list of opportunities for involvement by seafood supply chain companies in sub-regional and regional tuna management processes: Draft tentative list of activities, under three categories of: (a) Improving compliance with existing WCPFC CMMs; (b) Supporting improvements in regional and sub-regional management systems; and (c) Aligning national tuna management systems. [DOWNLOAD](#)

The following additional materials were posted to the WCPO Tuna MSC Principle 1 Alignment Group's website after the meeting:

- *Tokelau Arrangement for the Management of the South Pacific Longline Fishery*
- WWF. 2013. *Western Central Pacific Tuna Conservation Pledge*.
- WWF. 2014. *WWF's Position on Fisheries In Transition*.
- Gilman, E., Kingma, E. 2013. Standard for assessing transparency in information on compliance with obligations of regional fisheries management organizations: Validation through assessment of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. *Ocean & Coastal Management* 84: 31-39.

Appendix 4: List of Participants

Listed alphabetically by organization/company name.

Name	Organization / Company
Natalie Webster	American Albacore Fisheries Association
Helen Packer	Anova / Fishing&Living
Willem Huisman	Anova Netherlands
Scott Henderson	Conservation International
Katherine Short	Conservation International
Kevin Stokes	Conservation International
Ben Ponia	Cook Islands Ministry of Marine Resources
Elsie Tanadjaja	FishWise
Eric Gilman	Coordinator
Peter Cusack	International Finance Corporation Pacific Tuna Program
Victor Restrepo	International Seafood Sustainability Foundation
Masashi Nishimura	Japan Fisheries Association & Organization for the Promotion of Responsible Tuna Fisheries
Joe Murphy	Luen Thai Fishing Venture
Chrissie Sieben	MacAlister Elliott and Partners
Bill Holden	Marine Stewardship Council
Carlos Montero Castaño	Marine Stewardship Council
Momo Kochen	Masyarakat dan perikanan, Indonesia
Meredith Lopouch	Moore Foundation
Melissa Pritchard	New England Seafood International
Charles Laidley	Norpac Fisheries Export
Amanda Nickson	Pew Environment Group
Doug Beveridge	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
Iain Pollard	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
Matt Owens	Tri Marine
Rob Tilney	Tuna Management Association of New Zealand
Teresa Ish	Walton Family Foundation
Alfred 'Bubba' Cook	World Wildlife Fund
Habib Abdullah	World Wildlife Fund