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**REPORT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ON ARTICLE 30 OF THE CONVENTION
AND RESOLUTION 2008-01 OF WCPFC**

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Paper by European Union

Report of the European Union on Article 30 of the Convention and Resolution 2008-01 of WCPFC

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The main EU source of support to the Pacific region is the European Development Fund. Under the EDF10 some 18 million EUR have been allocated for regional fisheries projects in the Pacific to pursue the double objective of promoting sustainable management and ensuring maximum economic benefits for the region from these resources.

The Communication 'Towards a renewed EU-Pacific development partnership' published in 2012 highlighted the importance of cooperation on fisheries. With a strong focus on adaptation to Climate Change, the Communication puts the focus on the need to step up political cooperation and pursue a coherent agenda in terms of development assistance, sustainable exploitation of national resources and trade.

Regional projects funded by the EU are implemented by two regional agencies: FFA and SPC and directly benefit the work of WCPFC. The definition of the priorities and the implementation take into account the need of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The EU is willing to pursue and step up its dialogue and cooperation with the countries of the region and the regional agencies, FFA and SPC. Consultations on the Regional Indicative Programme for EDF11 are well advanced and we expect the RIP to be adopted in the next few months. Support to the fisheries sector should remain a priority to be included under sustainable management of natural resources and the environment.

Current actions are funded by 2 regional projects: DEVFISH2 and SCICOFISH

I/ DEVFISH2

The Financing Agreement between the European Union and the ACP States of the Pacific Region represented by the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Regional Authorising Officer, for the «Development of Sustainable Tuna Fisheries in the Pacific ACP countries Phase II» (DEVFISH2 Project) has an estimated total cost of EUR 8,200,000.

Recently, an addendum to the Contribution Agreement has been approved in order to increase its budget by EUR 518,000 (for a total of EUR 8,718,000) and to extend its implementation period to March 2016. The additional funds increase the original project budget by about 6.3%.

The project is implemented through two Contribution Agreements. The Contribution Agreement between the EU and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community is planned for execution from the 16 November 2010 to the 2 of March 2016, with a budget of EUR 2,730,854. The Contribution Agreement between the EU and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency is planned for execution from the 20 November 2010 to the 2 of March 2016, with a budget of EUR 5,491,146.

The overall objective of the programme is to increase the contribution from the sustainable use of highly migratory marine resources, particularly tuna, to the alleviation of poverty in P-ACP states, including Timor Leste.

The project purpose is to reduce constraints to domestic tuna industry development. These arise from economic and environment vulnerabilities, including lack of capacity to manage and support

the tuna industry; and IUU fishing activities which divert economic benefits and threaten efforts to sustainably manage the resource.

Support has been provided to develop the domestic tuna capacity in a number of countries with the focus to improve market access conditions through the establishment or effective operation of Competent Authorities and compliance with EU IUU regulation.

Activities and progress against the objectives in 2013-2014

- Concerning the *support to sanitary Competent Authorities* the main activities were as follows:
 - Ongoing support and back up for the established Competent Authorities of Fiji, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.
 - Assistance in the development of EU compliant Competent Authorities is on-going in several countries (FSM, Kiribati, Cook Islands, Marshall Islands and Vanuatu).
 - Both countries with established Competent Authorities and the ones trying to set up new ones benefitted from capacity building and inspector's training. For instance, a Regional Competent Authorities Standard Fish Inspectors course was developed and delivered. Participants from Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Fiji and Kiribati, representing both the government and the industry, attended the three-week course.

- Regarding the *support to the industry*, the following activities have been implemented:
 - Technical assistance and support for Fiji Tuna Boat Owners Association (FTBOA) Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) annual audit and for the Fiji Offshore Fisheries Association (FOFA) MCS eco-labelling pre-assessment study.
 - Support for electronic monitoring and observer trial in longliners belonging to the National Fisheries Development (NFD) fishing company of Solomon Islands and SATLINK.
 - IUU catch certificate training for government and industry has been developed and delivered.
 - Ongoing assistance to the work of the Pacific Islands Tuna Industry Association (PITIA).

- With regard to the *support to Pacific countries to control IUU fishing activities*, the main activities were as follows:
 - Preparation of a National Plan of Action (NPOA) for IUU fishing and associated Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) were formulated for Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, PNG, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.
 - Strategic support to MCS IUU detection operations and coordination is underway.
 - Work underway to improve IUU detection data and information systems and systems integration.
 - A Regional MCS Foundation Officer Course competency standards was completed and curriculum and course resource development processes are in advanced stages for delivery of the first course in October 2014.

- Assistance and support for the rollout of national information management system development programs and the development of the FFA Regional Information Management Facility (RIMF).

II/ SCICOFISH

The SciCOFish project, « Scientific support, for the management of coastal and oceanic fisheries in the Pacific Islands region », implemented through a Contribution Agreement between the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and European Union was planned for execution from the 17th of April 2010 to the 3rd of March 2014, with a budget of €8,655,765.

An addendum to the Contribution Agreement has been approved; this will extend the implementation phase of the project to 3 September 2015 and the budget to €9,233,765.

Its overall objective is the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and oceanic fisheries resources in the PACP region.

The project purpose is to provide a reliable and improved scientific basis for management and decision making in oceanic and coastal fisheries. The project will provide the P-ACP countries with the means to develop efficient management measures, the skills to monitor their effectiveness, and some important tools to combat IUU fishing.

Main achievements in 2013-2014

➤ *Training and Capacity Building*

- 154 'observers' from the Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, Kiribati, RMI, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu, were trained in 12 observer training courses.
- Training of observers in Marine Stewardship Certification (MSC) chain-of-custody documentation was initiated.
- Ten 'observer' trainers from FSM, Fiji, Kiribati, RMI, Nauru, PNG and Solomon Islands progressed to the next level of 'Observer' training
- 42 'de-briefers' from FSM, Fiji, Kiribati, RMI, Nauru, PNG, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu were trained
- Capacity development in FSM (12 staff) for sea cucumber surveys and Vanuatu (7 staff) for green snail surveys.
- Attachment training in Noumea for data entry, analysis and interpretation into management advice was conducted for Palau (3 staff), Fiji (4 staff), Cook Islands (2 staff) and Samoa (2 staff).
- Underwater Visual Census capacity development undertaken in Fiji (12 staff).
- 2 attachment trainings were held at SPC Headquarters for fishery officers from Tuvalu and Papua New Guinea and a stock assessment training workshop was delivered with 12 beneficiary countries present with at least one participant.

➤ *Fisheries databases*

- Tuna data audits conducted in five member countries (FSM, Palau, Fiji, Tuvalu, Kiribati) which have resulted in improved quality of fisheries data managed by these countries.

- The online, web-based VMS/log sheet reconciliation system is now fully operational and available to member countries. The system allows for Member countries to readily review and resolve the gaps in the provision of log sheet data by fishing companies; and to estimate annual catches and the coverage rates of log sheet data.
- Mini-servers have now been installed in all 15 countries covered by the project. These remotely maintained servers house coastal fisheries data, training materials and digital library, with the project providing a back back-up service for the coastal fisheries data in Noumea.
- The market and creel survey database is now fully operational.

➤ *Reports and Analysis*

- A good number of documents were published, enhancing EU's visibility in the region: 1 video documentary "Mermaids of Timor Leste", 5 national reports on invertebrates, 1 invertebrate survey methodology manual, 2 brochures promoting men and women jobs in fisheries, 1 policy brief on the relation of industrial and artisanal tuna fisheries, 1 set of invertebrate identification cards and 6 new information sheets, 2 leaflets and 3 posters added to the information kit for fishing communities.

➤ *Regional Advice*

- Regional stock assessments completed for South Pacific striped marlin, South Pacific swordfish and silky sharks.
- Economic data from longline fleets in Tonga, Samoa, Vanuatu and Fiji compiled.
- A regional bio- economic model for the southern longline fishery was developed building on the 2012 stock assessment for South Pacific albacore and economic data collected from regional fleets.

➤ *National Advice*

- A revised stock assessment for silky shark has been completed, including assessments for southwest Pacific swordfish and North Pacific blue-shark.
- Three sets of ISNRs¹ were completed - 1) One set covered the interaction between industrial fishing and artisanal fishing (seven completed in early 2013 and a further eight were sent out for country review in late 2013); 2) Another set was on the potential impacts of catch retention in industrial purse seine fisheries on food security and 3) Impacts of FAD closures at the EEZ and fleet levels (seven completed).
- Coastal Fisheries Management measures taken on board by Samoa, Cook Islands and Pohnpei, FSM due to project intervention
- Niue National coastal fisheries management and development Plan (2014 – 2018) developed with stakeholder participation
- Export databases installed in FSM, Tonga, Niue, PNG, Solomon Islands and Nauru.
- Installed 7 micro-servers with software in FSM (2), Tonga, Niue, PNG, Solomon Islands and Nauru.
- Assessments and management advice on invertebrate fisheries provided for Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Fiji with review of PNG management plan for sea cucumbers.

¹ Issue Specific National Reports (ISNRs) are reports to advice countries on particular issues, proposing options for tuna management planning, including economic aspects.

- Assistance to PNG has been provided to review their current management arrangements for the sea cucumber fishery.
- A “Roadmap for inshore fisheries management and sustainable development” to cover the period 2014 to 2023 was developed through a sub-regional workshop for the Melanesian Spearhead Group (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and New Caledonia), with each country also producing a national implementation plan.
- A Joint Corporate Strategy (JCS) developed for Kiribati
- Assistance to Fiji, in collaboration with FFA to develop a National Plan of Action for sharks; assessment of Fiji finfish data undertaken
- Assistance provided to Samoa with management of coastal resources in general.

➤ *Tagging Programme*

- The tuna tagging activities in the central Pacific Ocean resulted in over 6,014 bigeye tuna being tagged including the release of over 18 with electronic archival data collection tags. The total number of tagged tuna in the WCPO is now in excess of 401,000 and is the most extensive tuna tagging dataset available for stock assessment. The rate of tag recoveries currently exceeds 18% of releases.