

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION****TWENTY-THIRD REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES**

(Noumea, New Caledonia, 5-9 August 1991)

**TUNA AND BILLFISH ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME****DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN 1992-1996**

(as amended by SCTB 4)

(Paper prepared by the Secretariat)

**Background**

1. The South Pacific Commission's (SPC) Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme (TBAP) was first implemented in October 1981 as the successor to the Skipjack Survey and Assessment Programme (SSAP). The TBAP had an initial mandate to run for three years, with a priority task of establishing a Regional Tuna Fisheries Database. As tuna catches, fishing fleet diversity and fleet size in the SPC area increased, the TBAP was required to undertake a more diverse range of research tasks, and the programme was extended firstly for two years and subsequently for a further five years. This last five-year period will be completed on 30 September 1991.
2. SPC member countries have strongly supported the TBAP and expressed their desire for the programme to continue. As an initial step in this process, the 1990 Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish SCTB recommended that "... a Strategic Plan for the next five-year period (1992-96) be prepared to guide the future direction of this programme, and proposed that the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish be authorised to develop a draft document for consideration at the 1991 Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries ...". This recommendation was accepted by the 1990 Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries (RTMF) and a draft Strategic Plan developed by a sub-committee comprising SPC Fisheries Scientist, Dr Antony D. Lewis, an EC-funded consultant, Dr Timothy Adams, Mr Peter Sitan (FSM), Dr Talbot Murray (NZ) and Mr Andrew Richards (PNG).
3. This draft Strategic Plan (SPC Fisheries/Information Paper 1) was reviewed by SCTB 4, and a modified document produced. The new draft Strategic Plan clarifies the basic philosophy of the TBAP, and provides objectives to be used in the evaluation of existing and proposed new activities. The strategies to be applied in pursuit of these objectives are also listed.

**DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN (as amended by SCTB 4)**

**MISSION**

*To provide member countries with the scientific information and advice necessary to rationally manage fisheries exploiting the region's resources of tuna, billfish and related species.*

**OBJECTIVES**

*The TBAP embraces all the principals of the South Pacific Commission. In promoting the rational exploitation the tuna and billfish resources of the region, the TBAP will foster both regional and national capabilities to assess and manage those resources, maximise scientific cooperation for the benefit of all members, and maintain a commitment to high standards of fisheries science.*

*The TBAP objectives are:*

- . To ensure that member countries receive the best available scientific advice.*
- . To provide member countries with accurate assessments of tuna and billfish stocks and the effects of fishing on the stocks.*
- . To provide member countries with timely reports from an accessible, high quality fishery database encompassing the activity of all domestic and DWFN fleets in the region and adjacent areas.*
- . To enhance the national and regional awareness of fisheries issues through reporting research results and fisheries developments throughout the region.*
- . To maintain a commitment to developing national and regional capabilities in fisheries science.*

**STRATEGIES**

*To ensure that member countries receive the best available scientific advice, the TBAP will*

- . Maintain and enhance capabilities to monitor fisheries exploiting tuna and billfish stocks in the region.*
- . Liaise with member nations to determine national requirements.*
- . Establish research and monitoring programmes which are well designed and peer reviewed.*
- . Communicate the results of research and review to member countries.*
- . Facilitate programme evaluation and review of research directions and progress.*

*To provide member countries with accurate assessments of tuna and billfish stocks and the effects of fishing on the stocks, the TBAP will*

- . Attract and retain highly motivated and well-trained fisheries scientists.*
- . Develop and apply fisheries assessment techniques appropriate to the region's stock assessment needs.*
- . Contribute to and collaborate in complementary stock assessment activities elsewhere.*
- . Conduct research to improve knowledge of the biology of the region's major tuna and billfish species in support of stock assessment.*

*To provide member countries with timely reports from an accessible, high quality fishery database encompassing the activity of all domestic and DWFN fleets in the region and adjacent areas, the TBAP will*

- . Collaborate with member countries and other regional organisations to acquire comprehensive statistical data sets on fisheries exploiting the region's tuna and billfish stocks.*
- . Produce a range of fishery reports in support of national and regional requirements.*
- . Maintain and enhance in-country database capabilities for timely national fishery reports.*

*To enhance the national and regional awareness of fisheries issues through reporting research results and fisheries developments throughout the region, the TBAP will*

- . Produce briefings, newsletters, research reports and other publications on research findings and fishery developments.*
- . Organise meetings and workshops on key fisheries issues relevant to national and regional needs.*

*To maintain a commitment to developing national and regional capabilities in fisheries science, the TBAP will*

- . Assist in the development of national capabilities in the compilation of fishery statistics.*
- . Facilitate staff attachments in the TBAP and other appropriate training opportunities for Pacific Island nationals in TBAP research projects.*

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

*These strategies will be implemented through activities in four programme areas*

- *Statistics and monitoring*  
*Database maintenance, development and reporting.*
- *Biological research*  
*Population biology of tunas and billfishes; age, growth, migration, stock structure.*
- *Stock assessment and modelling*  
*Data analysis and modelling of the status and impact of fishing on the major tuna stocks of the region.*
- *Reporting and liaison*  
*Interaction and reporting to member countries; promoting collaborative research towards TBAP objectives.*

*Operational plans for 1992-1996 will be developed by TBAP and distributed in advance of the next SCTB for evaluation by that meeting.*

## **Conclusion**

4. RTMF is invited to review the draft Strategic Plan, as detailed above, with a view to it guiding the activities of the TBAP over the next 5-year period.