

ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

SEVENTEENTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 5-9 August 1985)

CONTINUATION OF THE TUNA AND BILLFISH ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

(Paper prepared by the Secretariat)

Background

The current Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme started in 1981 as an extension of the Skipjack Survey and Assessment Programme. Since its inception, countries of the region have recognized the usefulness of its work and have seen fit to recommend its continuation.

The current extension of the Tuna Programme originated with the Fifteenth Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries, August 1983, which "strongly recommended its continuation, for two years in the first instance". This recommendation was approved by the Twenty-third South Pacific Conference (1983), which approved the continuation "for two years in the first instance [of] the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme". In accordance with this decision the TBAP was extended from 1 October 1984 to be concluded on 30 September 1986.

As the forthcoming Twenty-fifth South Pacific Conference would be the only Conference to meet prior to the termination of the current phase of the Programme, a decision would need to be made by this Conference on whether the TBAP should be extended or allowed to lapse as at 30 September 1986.

In its deliberations on this matter the Meeting might like to consider that the Meeting of Coastal States and Distant-Water Fisheries Nations, held here in June 1984 at the instruction of the Twenty-third South Pacific Conference to consider ways and means of obtaining additional inputs of data and finance into the TBAP, expressed "strong support for the continuation of the work being done by the Tuna Programme". More recently, in March 1985, the Forum Fisheries Agency High Level Meeting on Regional Co-operation in Fisheries Management and Development "preferred options that did not require moving the [Tuna] Programme" from the South Pacific Commission. A study, required by the June 1984 Meeting of Coastal States and Distant-Water Fisheries Nations and approved by the Third Meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (May 1985), to recommend an appropriate institutional arrangement for the TBAP is now being finalised for consideration and decision by the September CRGA and the October Conference. Needless to say, the study presupposes the continuation of the activities of the Programme.

Action Required

In light of the above information and comments, the Meeting is requested to consider this matter and to make an appropriate recommendation to the Twenty-fifth South Pacific Conference.