

UNDP is implementing three regional projects as part of the overall Global Environment Facility (GEF) support to the implementation of the CTI Regional and National Plans of Action. This is the second issue of the quarterly update that provides information on progress and key results to inform the CTI stakeholders and identify opportunities for synergy. We welcome contributions and feedback from all CTI stakeholders. For more information about the overall UNDP/GEF CTI projects, please contact Jose Erez Padilla, UNDP Regional Technical Advisor at jose.padilla@undp.org. More information about each project is available in the respective project websites and from the regional project managers. Editing and lay-out of this e-newsletter are done by J. Padilla and Kwanruen Seub-Am at the UNDP Asia Pacific Regional Centre in Bangkok, Thailand.

West Pacific East Asia Oceanic Fisheries Management (WPEA OFM) Project

Contributed by Sung Kwon Soh (WPEA OFM Regional Project Manager and Science Manager, WCPF Commission)

With respect to tuna fisheries, the WPEA OFM project has been focusing on i) monitoring, data enhancement and fishery assessment, and ii) policy, institutional strengthening and fishery management. For the first, the project continues to establish infrastructures of the integrated fishery monitoring programmes for tuna catch data collection from port sampling, logbooks and observer programmes in Indonesia, the Philippines and Viet Nam. Various trainings have been conducted for data/database managers for quality control, total catch estimation and stock assessments. These have strengthened the capacity of national scientists to represent their respective countries particularly at the Scientific Committee meetings of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries (WCPF) Commission. For the second, activities are being undertaken to strengthen national capacity to fully comply with international agreements, especially those of the WCPF Convention requirements, through potential reforms of policies and regulations. These efforts will build on the ongoing development of national tuna management plans and the improvement of national tuna association activities in each of the three countries.

For 2011, the project is building on the accomplishments in 2010. The 20 – 30 enumerators hired in each country continue to collect biological and production data from key tuna landing sites employing uniform data collection forms and sampling protocols. These data are being installed at a central database system of each country and submitted to WCPF Commission. The data collection procedures and database are reviewed and audited by the Commission every year.



Staff members of the Department of Capture Fisheries and Resources Protection (DECAFIREP) in Viet Nam discuss with local workers the scale of daily fish landings and activities at a Binh Dinh landing site.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the Commission's designated data management agency, has been the major contributor to most data-related project activities. To build the countries' capacity on science, the project has been supporting the participation of data managers and stock assessment scientists through their participation in the annual Tuna Data Workshop and Stock Assessment Workshop hosted by SPC. For operational data collection, a logbook system was commenced at each country, and observers were trained in Philippines and Vietnam, and for Indonesia, the first observer training session is scheduled in 2011. To improve tag recovery rates, tagging posters prepared by SPC were translated into local languages and distributed to fishermen in the sample provinces. Development of each

country's tuna fishery profile that includes comprehensive tuna fishery related information is an ongoing project activity.

To strengthen the legal and management aspects of tuna fisheries, a gap analysis between national policy, legal and institutional arrangements and WCPFC requirements (Convention and conservation and management measures) is being conducted in each country. For example, WCPFC Member obligations include allowing fishing only where the Member is able to exercise effectively its responsibilities in respect of such vessels, while some countries issue permit only if the vessel complies with requirements/conditions such as VMS. Some countries need to set criteria to determine whether State "can exercise" responsibilities.

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Workshops were held to review the gap analyses to derive recommendations to address the gaps and the recommendations were submitted to the respective governments as basis for possible reforms of corresponding fishery laws and regulations. Studies were conducted to review and strengthen national tuna fisheries association activities of each country and to draft national tuna management plans for review by relevant government staff, industry representatives and invited international experts. Countries are still looking into these reports.

For 2011, the project identified 44 project activities which are mostly continuation of activities from the previous year. These activities will further strengthen the ongoing work to produce more solid outputs. Key activities throughout the year include data collection from port sampling, training for updating database and data analysis, implementation of logbook and tag-recovery programme. The 2nd quarter work plans include: i) review workshop on Indonesia's tuna fisheries catch estimates and review of logbook and observer programme (5-8 April); ii) participation in SPC's Tuna Data workshop (18-22 April); iii) Philippines' review workshop on catch estimates, logsheet data, and port sampling data and database in May; iv) Philippines' awareness WS on logbook in



A DECAFIREP staff is explaining to local fishermen a tagging poster which was translated into Vietnamese language.

June; v) Vietnam's review workshop on port sampling, logbook and observer programme in June; vi) participation in SPC's Stock Assessment workshop in June; and vii) review workshop on national tuna management plan, fisheries association activities and policy and legal arrangements in June.

The following are the key national partners: Research Centre for Fisheries Management and Conservation of Fish Resources and Directorate General of Capture Fisheries in Indonesia; National Fisheries Research and Development

Institute under Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and Bureau of Agriculture Statistics in Philippines; and Department of Capture Fisheries and Resources Protection and Legal Department in Vietnam.

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Focus on Our Partners; The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

Contributed by Sung Kwon Soh (WPEA OFM Regional Project Manager and Science Manager, WCPF Commission)

The CTI WPEA OFM Project is being implemented in collaboration with the WCPFC (the Commission). The Commission was established by the Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) which entered into force on 19 June 2004. The objective of the Convention is to ensure, through effective management, the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks in accordance with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement. Conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission are to be applied throughout the range of the stocks. The Convention also reflects the special political, socio-economic, geographical and environmental characteristics of the WCPO region (see map). The Convention seeks to address problems in the management of high seas fisheries resulting from unregulated fishing, over-capitalization, excessive fleet capacity, vessel re-flagging to escape controls, insufficiently selective gear, unreliable databases and insufficient multilateral cooperation in respect to conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks. The Commission has 25 Members, seven Participating



Territories and 9 cooperating non-Members. A small Commission Secretariat is based at Kolonia, Pohnpei State, Federated States of Micronesia. Additional information concerning the Commission, including copies of recent decisions, is available from www.wcpfc.int.

The Commission has adopted a number of monitoring, control and surveillance and compliance and enforcement measures that include the Regional Observer Programme, the Vessel Monitoring System, an Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Vessel List and high seas boarding and inspection procedures. These are path breaking measures that have never been adopted before by any other regional fisheries management organizations anywhere in the

world that is fully consistent with the provisions of the UNFSA. The increasing concern on overfishing of major tuna stocks in the WCPO has prompted the Commission to adopt conservation and management measures that aim to reduce fishing mortality on bigeye tuna by 30% over the next three years and to keep fishing mortality on yellow fin tuna from increasing. Conservation measures for swordfish, striped marlin, northern and southern albacore tuna, seabirds, sharks, and sea turtles have also been put in place.

Budget expenditure of the Commission has been increasing by an average of over 38% annually since 2006 and reached over \$6.6M in 2011. Over 97% of the income is from assessed contributions from Members using a contribution formula that includes a base fee and a variable fee. The variable fee is computed on the level of national wealth and catches. The collection of assessed contributions is based from binding decisions of the Commission which provide a sustainable source of revenues to support its operations.

It is recognized that the UNDP/GEF Pacific Oceanic Fisheries Management Project has facilitated the successful establishment of the Commission.

Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action (ATSEA) Programme

Contributed by Gabriel Wagey (Regional Project Manager)



First Project Board Meeting in Bali in February 2011

The ATSEA programme has successfully held the first Project Board Meeting in Bali, Indonesia on 16-17 February 2011. The meeting was attended by delegations from the Australia, Indonesia and Timor Leste, as well as representatives from UNDP (Asia Pacific Regional Center and Indonesia Country Office) and UNOPS. A delegate from PNG was invited as an observer.

The meeting resolved several key issues, such as the creation of the Stakeholders Engagement Group (SEG) and finalization of the work plan for 2011. Agreement was reached with respect to the target completion of the Transboundary Diagnostics Analysis (TDA) by the end of 2011, to be followed by the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) that will be finalized around the middle of 2012. The SEG, which represents NGOs, CBOs, research and educational institutions, private industry and sub-national governments from Indonesia, Timor Leste and Australia would provide advice and support to the Project Board to identify scientific issues of relevance, including global concerns that pertain to the Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS) region. Following this decision, the Project Management Office will soon constitute the SEG by inviting prospective members.

The meeting also welcomed the expression of interest of Papua New Guinea to become a new member of ATSEA project and requested UNDP to seek additional resources from the GEF for its inclusion in the project activities, in particular the ongoing TDA and SAP processes. The participation by PNG will cover all littoral countries in the ATS region. In this meeting it was also agreed that the second Project Board Meeting will take place in Australia in the last week of January 2012.

The Project completed the first group discussion on ATS profile reports as part of the TDA development process in Dili on 26-30 March 2011. The main result of this meeting was the TDA workplan outlining the process of completing the TDA by the end of 2011. The participants at this meeting included more than 30 scientists from Australia, Indonesia and Timor Leste. The meeting agreed on the transboundary priority concerns that are significantly affecting the ATS region.

During 10-23 May 2010, 28 researchers from various institutions and universities in Indonesia, Australia, and Timor Leste conducted biophysical assessments of the Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS). The ship, the RV Baruna Jaya VIII, stopped at 23 stations and collected physical, bathymetric, biological, chemical, and geological measurements, along with observations of any illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing and to assess the conditions of the ATS region. Physical indicators such as temperature, salinity and ocean current were measured and a physical profile of the ATS was elucidated. Echosounders, both single and multibeam, measured the bathymetry of the ocean floor in the south of Tanimbar Island in the Arafura Sea.

Since the first ATSEA oceanographic cruise covered only the Indonesian and part of Timor Leste waters, the Government of Australia has committed to conduct a second ATSEA cruise using the RV Solander of the Australian Institute of Marine Sciences (AIMS). The cruise will start from Darwin (Northern Territory) to survey the waters of northern part of Australia and also Timor Leste.

ATSEA will also take part and participate in a symposium at the Australian Marine Science Association (AMSA) which will take place on 3-7 July 2011 in Perth, Australia. At this national conference, there will be a major symposium exploring international marine science engagement in Australia's northern waters: entitled 'Marine science, connectivity, and research cooperation in the Arafura and Timor Seas'. The ATSEA project will have a key role at this symposium.

For more information please contact Gabriel (Tonny) Wagey (GabrielW@unops.org) or visit the project website at <http://atsea-program.org/>.



Group Discussion at the ATSEA Expert Meeting in Dili on 26-30 March, 2011

SULU-CELEBES SEAS SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT (SCS SFM) PROJECT

Contributed by Connie Chiang (Regional Project Manager) and Annadel Cabanban (Senior Fisheries Expert)



Sardines are small pelagic fishes that will be included in the fisheries management work in the demonstration sites in the three SCS LME countries

The Project has now arranged to work with Conservation International to update the transboundary diagnostic analysis (TDA) of the Sulu-Celebes (Sulawesi) Seas Large Marine Ecosystem¹ (SCS LME). It will build on an earlier assessment of this LME conducted in 2002 under the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA) Project supported by the GEF. An earlier important document that was completed in 2001 came out from the biodiversity visioning project² for SSME led by WWF. The SCS LME is ranked among the top 5 of the Global 200 which is WWF's listing of the priority biodiversity conservation areas globally. The SSME Ecoregion Conservation Plan (ECP) which consists of a regional and national action plans for Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. The ECP has ten objectives that are aligned with the national priorities of the countries and their commitments to common relevant international agreements and conventions.

The SSME-ECP has since been adopted by the three countries through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in February 2004 that was subsequently ratified by the three countries in 2006. The MOU that takes effect until February 2016 provided guidance for the formation of a tri-national governance for the implementation of the ECP. The SSME Trinational Committee was formally established in March 2006. (The structure of this Committee through which the SCS LME project is implemented will be featured in the next issue of this newsletter.)

The upcoming TDA will revisit the results of the earlier studies, which identified the following transboundary key areas of concern under

conditions about a decade earlier:

- Rank 1 – Unsustainable exploitation of fisheries
- Rank 2 – Habitat destruction and community modification
- Rank 3 – Pollution
- Rank 4 – Freshwater shortage
- Rank 5 – Global change (including climate change)

A subsequent activity of the project is the formulation of the Regional Strategic Action Programme (SAP) and corresponding national SAPs that will build on the SSME ECP and lessons from its implementation. To date, the project has worked together with Conservation International-Philippines as one of the partner organizations to plan for the conduct of the TDA and SAP following the methodologies espoused by the GEF international waters focal area. This plan will be presented to the project steering committee in mid-April 2012. The workshops and consultations will be conducted in 2011 and 2012 with target completion in the first half of 2012.

At the local scale, the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management is the concept that is adapted for fisheries management in three sites across SCS LME. The first step in the EAF is the scoping for the fishery management plan. The project has now prepared a template for the collection of data and information. The template and the technical aspects of the

project will be discussed in detail at a regional technical workshop in April. This will allow the stakeholders of the small pelagic fishery resource – the fisheries managers, scientists, and partners to come to a common understanding in the application of the EAF the management of this transboundary resource. We deem this a significant step in adaptive management in the SCS LME.

Up-coming events

- First Technical Workshop, 12-13 April 2011, Manila, Philippines
- Project Steering Committee Meeting, 14-15 April 2011, Manila, Philippines
- TDA regional workshop, mid June 2011, Manila, Philippines
- Review of national institutions for strengthening regional fisheries management
- Study on the stock definition of key species in the small pelagic fisheries
- Data-gathering of background information on small pelagic fisheries in demonstration sites in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines

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¹ The same LME is referred to as the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion (SSME) by the countries and its partners. SSME and SCS LME are used interchangeably.

² <http://www.worldwildlife.org/science/ecoregions/global200.html>