



## FIP Action Plan

### Fishery Improvement Project for the Republic of the Cook Islands Domestically-based Pelagic Longline Bigeye Tuna Fishery

Anova Food LLC & Luen Thai Fishing Ventures

30 April 2017

#### Activity 1. Engagement to Pursue Robust Harvest Strategies Adopted and Implemented

Milestone description	Schedule
(a) SPC or other credible scientific body assesses the efficacy of the current binding WCPFC tropical tuna measure with a determination of whether the WCPO bigeye tuna stock is demonstrably rebuilding and meeting other stock management objectives.	Every 2 years after adoption of a replacement CMM
(b) If a performance evaluation by SPC determines that the WCPFC CMM tropical tuna measure is not meeting the BET stock management objectives, i.e., the BET stock is not demonstrably recovering, and there is no 'strategy' in place to reduce the impact of all MSC certified fisheries on the stock to the point where they will not hinder recovery, then (i) the WCPFC CMM is to be replaced with one that meets stock management objectives and (ii) a strategy is adopted to reduce the impact of all MSC certified fisheries on the stock so that they are not hindering recovery.	Following publication of SPC evaluation recommending an amendment to the HCR, replacement CMM by the next WCPFC annual session, and MSC strategy within 12 months
(c) SPC develops recommendations of target reference points and alternative control rules.	Dec. 2017
(d) FFA and/or PNA adopt TRPs for Bigeye tuna.	Aug. 2018
(e) WCPFC adopts a TRP for the Bigeye tuna.	Dec. 2018
(f) WCPFC develops draft harvest strategies for Bigeye tuna.	Dec. 2018

(g) FIP Participants attend WCPO Tuna MSC Alignment Group in-person meetings and contribute to the Group's preparation of agreed position statements to PNA, FFA and WCPFC to address identified MSC P1 deficits.	Ongoing
(h) Document FIP Participant engagement with WCPFC CCMs and parties to FFA and PNA to advocate for needed improvements in sub-regional and regional management systems.	Ongoing

**Activity 2. Achieve 10% onboard (human and/or electronic) observer coverage rate, confirm which stocks are MSC main secondary and ETP species, and produce higher quality data to input to models assessing population-level effects on main secondary and ETP species**

Milestone description	Schedule
(a) Observer coverage rate is 10% of trips by Cook Islands locally-based longline vessels in calendar year 2018, through a combination of human observers and office-based analysis of data from electronic monitoring.	calendar year 2018
(b) MMR and/or SPC produce annual summaries of observer data publicly available in their Part 1 report to WCPFC to enable a determination of what species meet the MSC definition of main secondary species and ETP species, and summarize levels of compliance and non-compliance with relevant WCPFC bycatch CMMs.	annually
(c) MMR permits SPC and ISC to access Cook Islands longline observer data to be used for stock assessments, and if relevant scientific bodies and organizations request primary observer data, if determined to meet FSM data confidentiality restrictions, Cook Islands makes the data available for use in population assessments of the effect of the Cook Islands fishery broader assessments.	ongoing

**Activity 3. Improve observer data collection fields and data collection protocols for ETP handling and release, and compliance with ban on shark retention and use of shark lines and wire leaders**

Milestone description	Schedule
(a) Update SPC/FFA longline observer forms produced to address decision at WCPFC12.	Dec. 2017
(b) Cook islands national observer program begins to use the new longline observer form and modify observer training program materials as necessary.	Dec. 2018

**Activity 4. Build captain and crew capacity to implement prescribed handling and release practices for sharks, rays, turtles, birds and mammals and all FSM and company rules**

Milestone description	Schedule
(a) Annually as needed (e.g., if new relevant Cook Islands regulations are adopted, if the Cook Islands or WCPFC adopt new or revised guidelines on handling and release protocols for ETP species), review the captain training materials to determine if they require updating, where the workshop is designed to train longline captains in the Cook Islands longline fishery to: (i) understand Cook Islands government longline rules, (ii) improve species identification, (iii) understand proper methods for completing SPC logbook forms, and (iv) understand prescribed handling and release practices for seabirds, sea turtles, cetaceans and elasmobranchs to optimize the probability of post-release survival.	On-going
(b) Starting mid-2018, all captains of vessels in the client group annually attend one ETP training workshop.	Aug. 2018, ongoing
(c) Each vessel is provided with hard copy handling and release guidance materials, equipment, summary of Cook Islands rules, and summary of company policies.	Dec. 2016, ongoing
(d) Annually provide a summary of evidence from either or both observer data and dockside inspections that FIP vessels possess required sea turtle handling and release equipment onboard	Aug. 2018, ongoing
(e) All vessels in the client group are employing gear designs that are predicted to result in the terminal tackle soaking below 50 m depth.	Aug. 2018
(f) Via MMR review of observer data and/or via dockside inspections of FIP vessels, document at each annual surveillance audit that FIP vessels have onboard all required sea turtle handling and release equipment.	Aug. 2018

**Activity 5. Logbook data is improved to solve discrepancies with observer data, especially for ETPs. Through analysis of observer data, identify fishery-specific economically viable best practices to mitigate bycatch of species of conservation concern, and amend Cook Islands regulations and company policy to implement these identified best practices**

Milestone description	Schedule
(a) MMR arranges for analysis of confidential primary longline observer data	Dec. 2017
(b) If data suggest an issue with ETP interactions then the fishery will develop and implement further management actions to address the issue(s) identified.	Dec. 2018
(c) Improvement in identification of ETP species to the species level (including for sea turtles) and recording on SPC logbook forms by captains and crew of vessels in the client group will be pursued via the training workshop described in Activity 4.	Dec. 2018

**Activity 6. Provide evidence that processes at national level are put in place to i) regularly engage with key stakeholders to seek and accept relevant information, and ii) demonstrate that the information obtained from such engagement has been duly considered.**

<b>Milestone description</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
(a) In 2015 the FIP requested in a letter to MMR that MMR convene at least one stakeholder consultation per year to provide a venue to discuss and collect information on the domestic management framework for the Cook Islands longline albacore tuna fishery, and to request that, if the number of applications for longline licenses exceeds the limit, that a consultative Licensing Committee be convened. The client emphasized that the national consultation process should provide opportunity and encouragement for all interested and affected parties to be involved, and facilitates their effective engagement, and that the management system demonstrate how information received during the stakeholder consultations was considered, and how it was used or not used, and why.	2015
(b) In 2017, the FIP will remind MMR of the request to put in place a domestic consultative process that meets the MSC fisheries standard	On-going
(c) The domestic consultative process is in place.	August 2018

**Activity 7. Demonstrate i) that decision-making processes at national level respond to serious and other important issues identified in relevant research, monitoring, evaluation and consultation, in a transparent, timely and adaptive manner and take account of the wider implications of decisions and ii) that information on fishery performance and management action at national level is available to stakeholders on request, and that explanations are provided for any actions or lack of action associated with findings and relevant recommendations emerging from research, monitoring, evaluation and review activity.**

<b>Milestone description</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
(a) In 2015 the client urged the Cook Islands Government to ensure that the national decision-making processes for management of the Cook Islands longline bigeye fishery respond to serious and other important issues identified in relevant research, monitoring, evaluation and consultation, in a transparent, timely and adaptive manner and take account of the wider implications of decisions.	2015
(b) The domestic consultative process is in place. Stakeholder consultations will be open to all interested parties	Aug. 2018

**Activity 8. Tracking and Reporting Progress including Independent Audit of Status and Progress**

<b>Milestone description</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
(a) Given that the Yellowfin and Albacore portions of this fishery are MSC certified, progress of the Bigeye FIP will be assessed based on the annual surveillance audits.	Yearly, starting Aug. 2018
(b) Luen Thai and Anova, in consultation with other FIP participants, prepares a public FIP progress report identifying progress against workplan activities and schedule.	Yearly

**Activity 9. Ongoing Stakeholder Consultation**

<b>Milestone description</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
(a) In-person FIP stakeholder meeting	at least annually as side event to WCPFC annual session
(b) FIP website content kept up to date	At least every 6 months
(c) FIP public progress report distributed via email list and posted to FIP website.	At least every 6 months