

Thank you very much Chair, for this opportunity to report on the progress of the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project.

During the past year, the project supported several IOTC initiatives relevant to the work of the Scientific Committee

- Scientific and technical support for the second phase of the Indian Ocean yellowfin and bigeye management procedure development (executed by CSIRO)
- Support to the [First IOTC Technical Committee of Management Procedures](#) and the technical MSE meeting in Bangkok
- Support to an IOTC [Training on data-limited stock assessment methods for Tuna species](#) in May this year at the offices of the Seychelles Fishing Authority in Victoria, Seychelles
- Support to national awareness workshops on issues related to seabirds in several IOTC CPCs and pre-assessment workshops (led by Birdlife South Africa)
- Support to data collection activities through crew observers on gillnet vessels in Pakistan (led by WWF Pakistan)
- Support to the second capacity building workshop in the IOTC region on the role of management strategy evaluation in the development of harvest strategies targeting fisheries managers from developing countries (led by WWF).
- Support to trials of biodegradable FADs on European purse seine vessels

During the last year, the project also supported several initiatives aimed at sharing experiences between t-RFMO, such as

- the [Joint Meeting of tuna RFMOs on the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management](#) a second meeting is planned for 2018 in Rome
- the Joint Tuna RFMO Management Strategy Evaluation Working Group, a second meeting is tentatively planned for 2018 in Rome, subject to agreement with the Chair and participants of the group
- the [Joint t-RFMO FAD Working Group meeting](#) , a follow-up meeting tentatively planned for 2018 in Rome.

- Also, a staff member of the IOTC Secretariat was invited to observe the Project's operation of an EMS in Ghana.

The project is also providing support to IOTC initiatives to improve compliance and to help combatting IUU fishing such as:

- Support to the ePSM national trainings in Thailand and Indonesia
- Support to the development of the IOTC electronic monitoring and reporting information system (e-Maris) and the related validation workshop held in October 2017 in Capetown
- Support to the [\*Inception meeting of the Tuna Compliance Network\*](#) in Vigo and Madrid in March 2017 organized by the International MCS Network, a second meeting is planned at the FFA offices in Honiara, Solomon Islands in February 2018
- Support to an EMS pilot executed by the Seychelles Fishing Authority and OPAGAC
- Continued support to the CLAV now renewed until March 2018

With the next GEF replenishment phase in arrival, the project is starting to develop ideas for a potential next phase of the project.

Initial ideas include, among others,

- a pilot trial of Close-Kin Mark-Recapture technique to estimate abundance in pelagic shark species
- Continuation of the activities towards the implementation of the precautionary approach (management procedures and MSE) and the ecosystem approach
- Extension of the shark work carried out in the Pacific to the Indian and Atlantic Oceans
- More work on data-limited stock assessment methods

We are looking forward to discuss these and additional ideas with IOTC members and the Secretariat.

Again, considering that IOTC is one of the main partners of the Project, we will continue to work with the Secretariat and the officers of the Scientific Committee and the Commission to make sure that the members of IOTC benefit from the opportunities afforded by the Project.