

# **NATIONAL REPORT**

*NATIONAL LEVEL ANNUAL REPORT  
TO THE  
OCEANIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT  
REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE (OFM RSC)*

**Reporting Period, 1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008**

1. **Country:** MARSHALL ISLANDS

2. **Project Title:** Oceanic Fisheries Management: Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme of the Pacific SIDs (Pacific SAP II)

3. **Period Covered:** 1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008

4. **Summary of Overall Project Progress:** As in the previous reporting period, the RMI continued to benefit from various assistance and support under the overall project umbrella. A few of the highlights from this current reporting period include:

- As briefly reported in National Report from previous reporting period, a very timely in-country visit by the PCU finally commenced in early July 2007 and was a success. Among other things, the PCU updated the RMI Needs Assessment Report which was done in 2004 for the development of the OFM Project. Project brochures were also handed over to MIMRA during the brief visit.
- RMI hosted 2007 Operation Bigeye in mid-September 2007 which was the largest thus far in the Bigeye and Island Chief series at the time. Level of support to MCS initiatives from OFM Project quite prolific given vast array of technical issues involved.
- WCPFC Meetings:
  - a. MIMRA Director and Chief Fisheries Officer, Oceanic & Industrial Affairs, attended SC3 meetings in Honolulu in August 2007 and subsequently they, along with RMI Attorney General and industry representatives, attended pre-TCC3 (FFA briefing) and main TCC3 meetings in Pohnpei, FSM in September 2007;
  - b. Honorable Minister and Chairman of MIMRA Board led RMI delegation to WCPFC4 meeting in Guam in December 2007 (delegation included MIMRA Director and Deputy Director as well as large number of domestic industry representatives).
  - c. Director attended WCPFC Chair's briefing in Canberra in April 2008 prior to attending Access Negotiations Workshop alongside Deputy Director in Honiara.
  - d. It is well understood and fully acknowledged that the Project contributes significantly in the form of assisting with FFA briefs for all the above meetings.
- The TUFMAN database at MIMRA was upgraded to version 4.0 during this reporting period (latest upgrade to current version 4.43 recently completed and will be part of next National Report); in addition, MIMRA was also provided with all the latest periodical updates to the CES during this period.
- Deputy Director and industry representative attended MOW4 meetings in Rarotonga, Cook Islands in October 2007. Due to logistical difficulties, RMI was not able to attend related important meetings including RSC3 meeting.
- Deputy Director and industry representative attended Special PNA meeting in Honiara in February 2008; Deputy Director also attended US Treaty consultations in Rarotonga in March 2008.
- Director and Deputy Director attended Annual FFC67 Meeting in Koror, Palau in May 2008.

## **5. Specific Outputs/Results Achieved (as per annual work-plan):**

### **National level activities:**

- Due to scheduling conflicts and other logistical misfortunes, the RMI was not able to attend the last FFA WCPFC Sub-Regional Workshop. Instead, MIMRA opted to formally request FFA DG's assistance in allowing for WCPFC National Workshop to be held in Majuro in September 2008.
- As with the first Sub-Regional hosted by RMI in 2007, RMI stakeholders greatly benefited from the workshop and there was lot of active discussions on WCPFC issues and their implications on national fisheries development efforts.

### **Regional level activities:**

- Chief Fisheries Officer, Oceanic & Industrial Affairs, attended and further refined her scientific analysis and stock assessment skills at the following:
  - a. FFA Sea Turtle Mitigation Workshop: 11-12 March, 2008 (Nadi)
  - b. WCPFC 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuna Data Workshop: 7-11 April, 2008 (Noumea)
  - c. SPC ERA Workshop: 26-27 June, 2008 (Noumea)
  - d. SPC Stock Assessment Workshop: 30 June-4 July, 2008 (Noumea)

## **6. Challenges/Issues Encountered:**

- Overall, there is some considerable improvement with regards to familiarization and linkages of the Project to the wider regional fisheries management umbrella especially with ongoing efforts and developments stemming from WCPFC obligations and related challenges and issues. While challenges and related issues still linger, it has become much clearer how the overall project progress impacts upon national and regional initiatives. The RMI acknowledges that it had to take some time and will require even more as the Project ebbs along with the region's ongoing efforts to effectively manage its fisheries resources.

## **7. Solutions Applied (to address issues and challenges):**

- Increased awareness and up to date liaison with PCU. Establishment of routine contact with PCU via email has been well-received and very responsive. While often times overlooked, the existence of Project website has also been very beneficial in keep up-to-date on Project progress throughout the reporting period and overall during calendar years since inception. RMI considers this to be a big plus and thus very positive engagement.
- Hence, the need for more frequent liaison with PCU. In-country visit has really helped RMI in ongoing efforts at familiarization of the project and related cross-cutting issues at the national and regional levels.
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## **9. Recommendations for Future Action:**

- Periodic in-country visits have proven to be beneficial not only in terms of familiarization but also optimization of Project outputs.
- Possible assistance needed on formal initiation of NCC in RMI; additional briefing for relevant stakeholders inevitable.
- Informal discussions with both FFA and SPC on EAFM and NTFSR processes; possible start in early 2009 pending confirmation of agreed dates as per schedule of meetings and other relevant factors; periodic updates and ongoing correspondence.
- Ongoing communication with PCU on progress both at national and regional levels.

## **10. Report Prepared By: Samuel K. Lanwi, Jr., National (OFM Project) Focal Point.**