



4th FFA

Celebrating 40 years of Cooperation

PACIFIC ISLANDS
FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY

ANNUAL REPORT
FY2018-2019
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





40th FFA

Celebrating 40 years of Cooperation

FFA'S VISION STATEMENT

“Our people will enjoy the highest levels of social and economic benefits through the sustainable use of our offshore fisheries resources.”

FFA'S CORPORATE MISSION

“To drive regional cooperation to create and enable the maximum long term social and economic benefit from the sustainable use of our shared offshore fishery resources.”

CONTENTS

1. <u>DIRECTOR GENERAL'S</u>	
<u>ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19</u>	4
- Introduction	4
- Advancing the Contribution of the Fisheries Sector	5
- Addressing the Impact of Climate Change	6
- Progressing a Longline Strategy	7
- Improving Labour Standards	7
- Finalising our new FFA Strategic Plan	8
- Creating Stronger Partnerships	8
- Promoting Coastal States Rights within the WCPFC	9
- Removing barriers to female participation	10
- Advancing Fisheries Development	11
- Enhancing technologies and tools	12
- Strengthening capacity	15
- Acknowledging our Donor Partners	16
- Managing efficiently and professionally	17
- Conclusion	17



DIRECTOR GENERAL'S ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

INTRODUCTION

It is an honour to present the 2018/19 Annual Report for the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, particularly as the FFA is celebrating its 40th year. Our ongoing work to ensure the collective assertion of coastal States' rights, together with effective management of our regional offshore fisheries resources, honours the visionary decision to establish FFA.

My transition to this role has been greatly assisted by the support of Members and our staff, for which I am deeply grateful. I also wish to record my sincere appreciation to our former Director-General, Mr James Movick, from the Federated States of Micronesia. In his distinguished career at FFA, James made a significant contribution and he will no doubt continue to be a champion for member interests in the offshore fisheries sector.

On assuming the role of Director-General in mid-November 2018, I made four objectives central to our ongoing work: **maintaining regional solidarity, maximising economic returns, combatting IUU fishing and enhancing social benefits for Members.** In the months since, these objectives have been front and centre in our day-to-day work. All progress is measured by reference to them.

Members will know that I view **cooperation** as key to achieving these objectives. Cooperation moves mountains. It opens up opportunities for progress that are beyond the reach of individual action. In FFA's case, this translates as cooperation between Members, with partner organisations, and with other countries. We could each work alone but as the proverb states, "If you want

to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

In advancing this vision, the past 12 months has seen a highly consultative process within our Secretariat and Membership to develop and recommend to Ministers a new **FFA Strategic Plan 2020-2025**. This plan will govern our coming five years of work together and we look forward to both the challenges and opportunities the new Plan presents to us all.

In progressing the Strategic Plan, the FFA Secretariat will continue to place a strong priority on engagement at the national, sub-regional and regional level. This will include consideration of the way we define and deliver our program of work - and how we monitor, evaluate and report on our performance.

More than ever, **empowerment** is top of mind for FFA. This is underlined in the new mission for the Strategic Plan. The Agency is a proudly **member-driven organisation** and in this, our 40th year, I have observed a renewed determination by Members and Secretariat staff to become more empowered, which is exciting to see as we celebrate the foresight and courage of those Leaders who created the Agency in 1979. Our shared mission is to ensure our people have all the tools to shape a successful **Blue Pacific** future, and empowerment will help to underpin this goal.

Greater empowerment also brings greater responsibility. This Annual Report details many initiatives but I want to highlight the most critical three here.



The agreement reached at FFC110 to introduce minimum terms and conditions (MTCs) for **employment standards of crew** on board fishing vessels, thereby reducing the risk of potential human rights abuses, was a landmark moment.

It again demonstrated that FFA sets world-leading standards. Members are determined to 'walk the talk' to address human rights abuses at sea by turning these MTCs into laws and licence conditions and applying them to all vessels.

Managing the longline fishery more effectively is also critical. Leaders have directed that we must make the longline fishery more economically viable and improve the prospects for meaningful participation by our domestic fleets. It has been rewarding to see Members adopt a **Regional Longline Strategy**.

Most critically, our Leaders have stated that Climate Change is the single greatest threat to our people. Climate Change is the biggest challenge of our generation and we must actively cooperate at all levels in addressing it. The scale of the issue is daunting but, from what I have observed during my first months as Director-General, FFA Members are deeply committed to working together to make a meaningful contribution. It's the **Pacific Way**.

ADVANCING THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE FISHERIES SECTOR

It is very pleasing to note that the goals for offshore tuna fisheries set out under the Regional Roadmap for Fisheries are largely being achieved.

The sustainability goal is accomplished with all four main tuna stocks of the WCPO being 'in the green', that is, all stocks are not overfished nor is overfishing occurring. The WCPO is the only tuna fishing region for which this is the case. With regard to the economic goals, all indicators - the share of catch taken by local fleets, contributions to GDP, employment, access revenues and exports - continue to show a positive growth trend.

The tuna fisheries of the WCPO remain a most significant contributor to the economies of FFA Members. The contribution to GDP of the harvest sector across FFA Members exceeded \$400 million while government revenue from access fees was \$US535 million. Both represent record highs.

The catch taken by fleets of FFA Members continues to grow and reached 715,000 metric tonnes with an estimated value of \$US1.5 billion. Employment in tuna related sectors also continued to increase to an estimated 22,600.

Going forward, the trend for increases in these contributions to the economies of FFA Members is likely to continue.

However, value is not measured in dollars alone. Food security is a major emerging issue for the region and the Secretariat has commissioned a study that examines the contribution of the locally based offshore sector to domestic food supplies.

Likewise, our quality of life can only be sustained and improved if we work together with our partners to achieve the goals identified in the Roadmap for both inshore and offshore fisheries. A region with continued access to an affordable and high quality supply of fish would be materially enriched and would be a great legacy for future generations.

ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Notwithstanding the economic progress being made, our Leaders have rightly identified that **Climate Change** remains the “single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing” of Pacific Island people.

In September 2018, Leaders adopted the Boe Declaration which includes a strengthened priority for promoting environmental security and fostering regional cooperation in building resilience to disasters and Climate Change. A changing ocean environment will affect the distribution and abundance of tuna which will in turn affect fishing catch and revenue.

The FFA Membership provided two clear instructions at their May meeting:

- advance efforts to understand and manage the impacts of Climate Change on offshore fisheries; and

- work closely with our regional counterparts - SPC, PNA Office (PNAO), SPREP and PIFS to prepare joint advice for officials and Ministers.

A central task is the adaptation required for fisheries management regimes, given the predicted impacts on the movement, distribution and abundance of tuna.

The Secretariat will work closely with Members, including the PNA Office, to develop adaptive management regimes at national, subregional and regional levels. The impacts of the predicted migration of the key tuna species across the membership requires this broader review, and will be informed by national and subregional discussions and positions. This will also include ensuring that adaptive mechanisms are built into WCPFC CMMs.

From a tuna fisheries perspective, there are other key work areas. Sea level rise will impact the physical delimitation of **maritime boundaries**, hence the importance of continued close work with SPC and other Partners to determine and legislate baselines and corresponding zones and then submit these to the UN.

The predicted decline in coastal fisheries also means that tuna will be essential for meeting local **food security** needs. There is a need for **disaster risk management** when making fisheries development decisions, such as building of ports and other fisheries-related infrastructure. Any **ozone depleting substances** used in the offshore sector, such as for refrigerant purposes on fishing vessels, also need to be eliminated.

In pursuing this work, the Secretariat is committed to advancing the collection of more information on the economic and food security impacts of Climate Change within the fisheries sector. We need to have a better understanding of how this information can be integrated into mitigation and adaptation strategies. Given the cross-cutting impacts of Climate Change, the Secretariat will closely coordinate with the relevant CROP organisations and PNAO to ensure coherent advice to Members.

It is important to note that we have been advancing this work with the activities of our OFMP-2 program, in close collaboration with SPC. This has included a four-year scientific analysis of the impacts of Climate Change on our tuna resources.

Our work to advance a further iteration of the OFMP is based around a completed Trans-Boundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and the related Strategic Action Plan (SAP). We will now work to secure further support from the Global Environment Fund (GEF) to help understand and manage the impacts of Climate Change on the offshore fishery.

PROGRESSING A LONGLINE STRATEGY

In line with the Ministers' request for a Regional Longline Strategy (RLLS), the last year have seen development of a strategy drawing on dedicated FFA member consultations.

Some observations of note are:

- Due to current ineffective management, longline fisheries have a much less favourable cost/revenue ratio than purse-seine fisheries. Catch rates need to be improved in order to improve profitability. This can only be achieved by limiting fishing both on the High Seas and in zones to help rebuild target species biomass.
- Subsidised foreign longliners can stay fishing long after it is economically viable for domestic Pacific Island fleets to keep fishing. This further drives down biomass to uneconomic levels.
- Overall monitoring and reporting of longline fishing is far lower than for purse-seine fisheries. Low levels of observer coverage, and the significant amount of longline activity on the high seas, including transshipment, where regulation and monitoring is limited, all contribute to the parlous state of regional longline fisheries.

Further driven by the progress at the WCPFC on the adoption of a Target Reference Point for South Pacific Albacore, the FFC Meeting in May 2019 adopted a strategy for turning this situation around over time.

The RLLS is a mechanism for recognising these difficult issues and for assisting Members to agree on actions to address them, including within the WCPFC. This work will rebalance some of the disproportionate burden that many coastal States face in the management of longline fisheries.



IMPROVING LABOUR STANDARDS

In 2018, Fisheries Ministers directed the Secretariat “to continue to work on initiatives **to ensure jobs in the industry are worthwhile and safe, including for Pacific Islanders**”.

In response to this challenge, I am delighted to report that Members at FFC 110 in Pohnpei endorsed additions to the Harmonised Minimum Terms and Conditions for Fishing Vessel Access (HMTCs) to safeguard human rights and impose minimum labour conditions for crew.

This ground-breaking decision confirms the FFA's commitment to a socially and biologically sustainable tuna fishery. Members' concerns have been increasing over conditions in high seas fisheries on foreign longline vessels. Crew are often required to stay at sea for up to a year with poor pay and conditions and harsh penalties for dissent.

The Secretariat will support Members to incorporate the new HMTCs into their national regulatory frameworks. Under the new requirements, the fishing vessel operator will become formally responsible for the health, welfare and safety of the crew while on-board the vessel. They will also be required to provide decent salary and conditions for all crew.

I am confident that the new HMTCs will protect basic human rights for those working in our offshore tuna fishery and ensure that there is no place for 'slavery at sea' in our region.

FINALISING OUR NEW FFA STRATEGIC PLAN

The **Strategic Plan 2020-2025** will be one of the FFA's key governance documents, and the last 12 months have seen an intensive and highly consultative process with Members and the Secretariat staff to agree the details of a new Plan.

The new Plan differs from its predecessor in the following ways:

- A shift away from programme-based Outcomes (reflecting the current programmes and structure of the FFA Secretariat) towards broader Outcomes and Strategies that better define the purpose of FFA's work;
- The use of an Implementation Plan to guide and translate the high level Plan into key Actions, which clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of FFA, FFA Members and the FFA Secretariat in delivering on the Strategic Plan;

- A greater focus on empowering people through capacity building for members and strengthening of our fisheries organisations at national and sub-regional level as well as the FFA Secretariat itself;
- More deliberate reflection on the role of the FFA Secretariat in providing targeted advice and other services to FFA member countries at regional, sub-regional and national level - including by strengthening of the CSLA framework and consideration of the roles of other organisations, donors and service-providers in delivering the desired overall outcomes to FFA Members.

With the new Plan to commence on 1 July 2020, our work in the coming year will focus on a detailed implementation process. The Secretariat extends thanks to New Zealand for supporting this work through additional funding.

CREATING STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS

Our membership is the most important partnership for the FFA Secretariat, both individually and collectively. As part of the new Strategic Plan process, we have prioritised an enhanced definition and operation of our Country Service Level Agreements (CSLAs) and this work will be a major focus over the coming year.

More broadly, regional fisheries are attracting increased attention from stakeholders in response to the growing economic importance of the offshore fisheries sector, demands for sustainability, and the interplay between regional and international interests. There is also stronger recognition that the fisheries sector does not operate in isolation and is part of the regional geopolitical context. The close work with other national key sectors, in particular Ministries of Foreign Affairs, has been valuable.

The FFA has an enduring role in these processes and is working to more strategically engage with partners. The new **Strategic Mapping** processes within our work in the WCPFC is an example of this work. The Secretariat is focussed on targeted and timely engagement with DWFNs and other key stakeholders to better advocate for our key priorities, defining our policy positions and ensuring we speak with one voice on regional interests.

In February of this year, I was delighted to conclude agreement of a Memorandum of Understanding with the **Parties to the Nauru Agreement Office (PNAO)**. This lays the foundation for ensuring a collaborative approach to our work together in support of our Members. Part of this successful collaboration has seen the continued solid financial returns from the Treaty between the United States and Pacific Island States for US purse seiners. In 2018, the Treaty delivered USD 60,317,927 through this regional access.

Under an existing MOU, we enjoy broad-based collaboration with the **Fisheries Aquaculture and Marine Environment Division of the Pacific Community (SPC-FAME)**. Our annual colloquium with SPC-FAME remains a key priority and within the overall FFA annual work programme, collaboration with both the PNAO and SPC-FAME is essential.

Further, I am pleased to recognise the development of an informal grouping of like-minded Members, namely Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu, known for now as the South Pacific Group (SPG). Supported by FFA where required, the SPG's work is intended to include identifying and developing opportunities in both the longline and purse seine fisheries, which will benefit from enhanced subregional action.

Meanwhile, the **Tokelau Arrangement** remains an important grouping for advancing management of South Pacific albacore. We will also continue to engage with the **Melanesian Spearhead Group** where relevant engagement is identified in the offshore sector and in the delivery of the regional Roadmap for Sustainable Fisheries.

Concurrently, I note our work in progressing the **Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting** which immediately follows the annual FFC Ministerial meeting and will better coordinate the flow of fisheries priorities to Leaders at the annual **Pacific Islands Forum Leaders** meeting. The FFA has been working closely with SPC, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, SPREP and PNAO to advance the Terms of Reference for this new one-day meeting which allows Fisheries Ministers to be briefed on coastal fisheries and cross-cutting issues such as the impact of climate change and marine pollution on regional fisheries.



PROMOTING COASTAL STATES RIGHTS WITHIN THE WCPFC

It is a privilege to report that the five WCPFC priorities set by our Ministers were achieved at WCPFC15, namely:

- 1) South Pacific Albacore: adoption of a Target Reference Point (56%) which is an important milestone for management of this fishery. Our ongoing work on the Regional Longline Strategy (RLS) is strengthened by this outcome;
- 2) Tropical Tuna: maintaining the strength and delicate balance of the Tropical Tuna measure which provides for the various interests in these fisheries and particularly takes account of PNA members' interests in the tropical skipjack fishery and the operation of the Vessel Day Scheme;

- 3) Special Requirements of Small Island Developing States: the decision to provide funds which will help boost participation of SIDS in the work and decision-making processes of the Commission;
- 4) The critical matter of labour conditions on fishing vessels including the adoption of a Resolution to encourage safe and fair conditions on fishing vessels for all crew. We proudly note that FFA Members continue to lead by setting the standards for responsible fishing in all respects and driving the WCPFC agenda to be the first RFMO to take this critical step. Our follow up action at FFC 110 in Pohnpei in May 2019 is reported above;
- 5) Compliance Monitoring Scheme: a high priority for our Members is the adoption of a revised measure which will ensure continued focus on a Scheme that is effective, efficient, fair and that helps Members to improve compliance. FFC110 agreed a plan of action to ensure the work on an appropriate CMS continues to be advanced in accordance with our Members' interests.

FFA Members continue to drive the agenda of the **Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission** – a claim that cannot be easily made by coastal States within other RFMOs. The increasingly proactive role of our **Fisheries Ministers** within the Annual Session of the WCPFC has been crucial in sustaining progress in this Commission. We enjoy very close cooperation with the PNAO and SPC-FAME in delivering this critical work.

I also recognise the work of the **WCPFC Secretariat** in bringing together the interests of both coastal States and flag States in the WCPO. More FFA Members are becoming flag States and our work will support our membership to deliver on their international and regional obligations as well as their ambitions to derive optimal value from the fishery within sustainable limits.

REMOVING BARRIERS TO FEMALE PARTICIPATION

Developing and promoting the contribution of women to the regional fisheries sector and removing barriers to participation by women at all levels is a key priority. The FFA Gender Equity Framework in 2016 and the release of the Secretariat's Domestic Violence Policy in 2018 have underpinned the FFA's commitment in this area.

The Secretariat will foster pathways to leadership for women in the fisheries sector on the basis that it is possible to balance work and family life (and the two can reinforce each other) if the right enabling environment is developed.

In the past year, the FFA has continued to advance gender issues through a range of advocacy and practical measures, including:

- a) Providing meaningful support to Secretariat staff within the auspices of the Domestic Violence Policy to ensure they have a safe place to live and emotional support during times of domestic conflict.
- b) Financial and editorial support for the development and launch at HOFS in March 2019 of the SPC Pacific Handbook for Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture – with the commitment to now extend this to the Offshore sector with further FFA involvement.
- c) Sustained advocacy and engagement on gender issues, including International Women's Day and the release of the second edition of our Moana Voices publication highlighting success stories as a way of encouraging further women's participation in the sector.
- d) Work within Fisheries Development Division where some exciting initiatives are being progressed with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) including projects to address:

- the lack of women in leadership positions in private sector fisheries;
- low financial literacy and attendance of fish processing staff, and
- gender-based job segregation in fisheries (and more specifically harvesting).

In addition, I had the honour to participate in the Pacific Women Leaders Coalition Conference convened by H.E. Hilda Heine, President of the Marshall Islands. The Secretariat applauds President Heine's important initiative and is strongly committed to supporting this platform to discuss the challenges women face in various sectors.

Arising from this Conference, the Secretariat will continue to examine options for a suitable gender forum and create opportunities to exchange experiences and further avenues of support.

ADVANCING FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT

Market access

The interest of Members in establishing EU-certified **Competent Authorities** (CAs) continues to grow, as does demand for the Secretariat's assistance to respond to requirements of both EU and non-EU markets. The regional concepts previously explored have now been adjusted to reflect the preferences of Members for national authorities with direct involvement of their officers. The Secretariat is working closely with Members to assist their development of CAs.

WTO Members have committed to agreeing to **new rules limiting harmful subsidies** to the fishing sector by 2020. The Secretariat is working with the PIFS Geneva office to coordinate a Pacific response relevant to the direct interests of the Pacific Islands' fisheries sector. This includes the elimination of subsidies that may promote illegal fishing - including fishing on overfished stocks, and contributing to overcapacity and overfishing, especially by large-scale fishing nations. This

work must also ensure that eventual subsidy rules do not produce a disproportionate burden on Pacific Island countries or have unintended consequences for non-commercial fishing, while providing flexibility for future fisheries development.

Joint Ventures

There has been a growth in **joint ventures** with foreign fishing companies as Members seek to diversify income streams and create domestic employment opportunities, both in harvesting and processing. The Secretariat currently provides **advice and resources** to Members wishing to establish new fisheries joint ventures, and ongoing support to existing ventures including reviews, governance or legal support, where requested.

There remain some adverse actions on the part of joint venture partners, including failure to meet obligations as contained in the relevant agreements. In some cases, joint ventures are resulting in insolvency and litigation. While there can be various reasons for such outcomes, there is a clear need for Members to improve their governance and oversight of joint venture arrangements, to ensure the success and sustainability of the joint venture.

In the current year, the Secretariat has offered Board of Directors training to assist members in this role. In May 2019, FFC 110 also agreed that the Secretariat form a panel of experienced industry practitioners to provide guidance and support to Members on existing or proposed joint venture investments.

Economic analyses

The Secretariat continues to collect and disseminate economic data and supports the efforts of Members to establish voluntary guidelines for the submission of **economic data** to the WCPFC. The Secretariat also continues to improve the quality of the data collected and will undertake a review of its current data collection processes.

The Secretariat undertakes **economic analyses** to assist Members in decision making at the national, sub-regional and

regional levels. This work ranges from analysis of limits under national management plans, impacts of marine area closures and economic conditions in the major tuna fisheries to trade-offs under potential target reference points (TRPs) for the main tuna stocks.

The Secretariat has begun building its own capacity in relation to predictive analysis with work underway on predicting skipjack prices using machine learning techniques. It is intended to further develop capacity to investigate approaches to management and investment that go beyond what has traditionally been applied in this region.

The Secretariat is also **enhancing capacity** in the area of economic analysis and its application to fisheries. To this end, national training workshops commenced in 2019.



ENHANCING TECHNOLOGIES AND TOOLS

Monitoring and Surveillance

There has been continuous improvement in MCS both at regional and national level, reflecting Members' uptake of the existing arrangements and tools, together with proactive trialling of new technologies.

Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring (ER and EM) have significant potential to strengthen MCS through timely reporting and independent monitoring. ER is implemented widely among the membership and we continue to strengthen and expand

on this work. EM has also been partially implemented and trialled. While there is a growing Member commitment towards implementation of both ER and EM, further work is needed at the regional level to address standards, operating procedures and training. The Agency is placing a priority on this work.

Emerging technologies being trialled or implemented include synthetic aperture radar (SAR), unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) radarsat imagery, light/VHF sensing and machine learning tools.

Port State Measures and Catch Documentation

Solid progress is now being made in assisting FFA members to establish efficient but rigorous **Port State measures**, and in driving the development of regional minimum standards for **Catch Documentation**. Both of these project activities are supported by the New Zealand government and will be essential for maintaining access for Pacific Island tuna products to major export markets.

The Secretariat is assisting Members who are party to the FAO Port State Measures Agreement to implement its requirements, as well as implement the WCPFC CMM 2017-02 on Minimum Port State Standards agreed by WCPFC14. In May 2019, Members adopted a Regional Port State Measures Framework to guide the development of national port State measures, promote inter-agency coordination and improve data and information exchange. The Secretariat will support Members to implement this framework.

Implementation of Regional Initiatives

The **Regional MCS Strategy (RMCSS)** adopted by the Forum Fisheries Committee in May 2018 provides a clear policy focus for FFA's MCS activities until 2023 and this is the first year of implementation. The majority of activities are underway (nationally and/or regionally), with some activities such as training and capacity development already showing strong uptake.

The multilateral Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement (**NTSA**) provides a framework for sharing resources and information for both fisheries and broader law enforcement purposes. Members' uptake of the NTSA has been steadily increasing, with the continued focus on the operationalisation of the Agreement.

The Secretariat has conducted a number of workshops to enhance Members' understanding and to trial the information system that supports the Agreement. The Secretariat will be working closely with Members to ensure greater utilisation of the NTSA throughout the coming year.

The **Persons of Interest (POI)** work is unique to our region and has significant potential to further address IUU fishing. It is widely recognised that it is persons (both natural and legal) who commit IUU fishing offences rather than vessels. Accordingly, a further POI workshop was held this year building on previous work and focussing on key components of the POI scheme, i.e. establishing and maintaining a POI register; criteria for POI categories; responsibilities for the Secretariat and Members; and a unique person identifier.

The Secretariat continued to keep abreast of regional developments relating to **Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)**. These developments included participating in the *Boe Declaration*¹ process, and discussions around the development of a *Pacific Fusion Centre*.

This engagement recognises the relevance of the existing regional fisheries frameworks, systems and tools for information sharing across a broader range of law enforcement purposes. Ensuring this work remains fully in accordance with information sharing protocols and the principles of the **FFA Information Security Management System (ISMS)** is a key priority.

MCS Training

A number of MCS training activities were delivered for Members during the reporting period at both the regional

and national levels. These include: PSM and CDS workshops; critical incident workshop, in-country VMS training, MCS/VMS attachments, Train the Trainer, Dockside boarding and Inspection training, Operations watch keeper training, Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and Certificate IV in Fisheries Enforcement and Compliance. Members uptake of these training opportunities, in particular, Certificate IV in Fisheries Enforcement and Compliance course continue to grow with a high percentage of Member participants successfully completing this course.

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Aerial Surveillance and Operation of RFSC

The FFA continues to implement the **Regional Aerial Surveillance Programme (RASP)** as part of the broader Pacific Maritime Security Program (PMSP) funded by Australia. Since its inception in early 2018, the programme has provided a significant increase in aerial surveillance coverage for FFA Members' EEZs in addition to the traditional support provided by our Quadrilateral defence partners - Australia, France, New Zealand and the United States.

While some operational and administrative challenges have been encountered, these are being minimised through national level MOUs which the Secretariat is working actively with Members to finalise. The planning, scheduling and coordination of the program is conducted out of the **Regional Fisheries Surveillance Centre (RFSC)** at FFA Headquarters in Honiara.

The RFSC has continued to undertake a number of activities to combat IUU fishing.

These include:

- planning and coordination of the four regional surveillance operations with Members and Quadrilateral partners;
- provision of technical advice and support to Members conducting

¹ <https://www.forumsec.org/boe-declaration-on-regional-security/>

- sub-regional and national surveillance operations;
- building and strengthening national MCS officers' capacity to plan, coordinate and conduct national and sub-regional surveillance operations through engagement of officers (watch keepers, MCS analysts and Chief of Staff) during regional surveillance operations;
- provision of daily MCS services including updated Regional Surveillance Picture (RSP), licensing information, and information on possible IUU fishing activity to Members and surveillance partners;
- trialling of new technologies to complement the existing tools used to combat IUU fishing; and
- tasking under the RASP as described above.

Information Management

In response to Members' priorities, the Secretariat is progressing work to strengthen regional Information Management Systems (IMS). This will include external support to review the IMS strategy and to undertake an IMS business needs analysis.

Other key work areas include:

- The migration of national IMS to RIMF2 platform - this was partially completed with 13 Members migrated to RIMF2 platform and training on the use of national IMS and RIMF2 ongoing. A TOR for development of an industry portal is being progressed.
- The consolidation of FFA internal systems - this is progressing well with work on the Electronic Vessel Register (EVR) and the Boarding Officer Job Aid Kit (BOJAK) now available to Members on a view-only basis.
- Hardening and upgrade of FFA ICT infrastructure - this work was completed in preparation for the advent of the Solomon Islands Coral Sea fibre-optic cable. The new cable offers opportunities for far greater efficiency, timeliness and cost-effectiveness in the way the FFA

engages with its Members and other stakeholders.

Information Security

Strengthening information security within the Secretariat is a key priority. The revised Information Security Management System (ISMS) policy was adopted by FFC110 in May 2019. Tasks to improve information security included:

- The completion of phase 1 of the FFA ICT infrastructure upgrade with the phase 2 work plan currently being developed;
- A Disaster Recovery Site (DRS) fully operational and with further testing to commence once the DRS plan has been formally agreed;
- FFA anti-Phishing campaign commenced and will continue until October 2019;
- Daily network vulnerability scanning is ongoing with alerts being monitored and reviewed;
- Enhanced security training for staff will be provided in coming months; and
- Outsourcing of some external security controls is under consideration.

With the endorsement of the revised ISMS policy, there will be an increased focus on assisting Members with the development and/or strengthening of their own national ISMS policies and systems.

Vessel Monitoring System

The **Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)** is one of the key MCS tools for monitoring the activities of fishing vessels registered on the FFA Vessel Register. The functionality of the system continues to be improved. A number of in-country VMS related training missions were delivered to Members including VMS training and MTU inspection training, in addition to attachments to the FFA Secretariat.

Other VMS related in-country assistance includes financial support on communication costs for Members and technical support on Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) communications. The FFA continues to be the VMS service provider to WCPFC under

the FFA/WCPFC Service Level Agreement. Additional E-MTU/MTUs were type approved to be used by vessel operators and this will improve the general VMS reporting of vessels on the system.

Observer Programme

Fisheries Observers continue to play a critical role in fisheries management as one of the fundamental MCS tools to deter IUU fishing activities on board licensed fishing vessels. They are the eyes and ears of the Pacific Islands fisheries authorities, and continue to collect vital information for tuna stock assessment and compliance purposes.

Key work areas included:

- progressing the work on the elements of observer insurance, in consultation with Members;
- responding to Member's national observer programme requests to develop a national cost recovery policy, SOPs and other technical assistance;
- continuing to strengthen and build national observer programme capacity in collaboration with SPC and PNAO;
- trialling Electronic Reporting using the FIMS observer application on the US Treaty purse seine fleets;
- ongoing collaboration with SPC in a number of areas including working towards accreditation of Qualification of the PIRFO observer training – Certificate 3 in Observer Operations; registration of the PIRFO logo as a Pacific Islands Fisheries Observer trade mark; and ongoing review of the PIRFO training standards;
- training of observers on use of Electronic Reporting and Monitoring tools in collaboration with SPC and PNAO; and
- addressing regional observer operational issues in collaboration with national observer programmes.

Observer safety and training – and providing the tools needed to effectively and efficiently carry out their role - is ongoing priority work for the Secretariat in collaboration with SPC, PNAO and other key stakeholders.

STOP IUU Award

Members can be proud that the FFA integrated MCS framework is world-leading in addressing IUU fishing. I am very pleased to report that the FFA recently won first prize in the international “Stop IUU Fishing” competition organised by the International Monitoring Control Surveillance (MCS) network. The award was in recognition of the FFA Integrated MCS Framework, which plays a critical role in addressing IUU fishing in offshore Pacific tuna fisheries.

The FFA integrated MCS framework is underpinned by cooperation and coordination at national, regional and international levels through a combination of regional arrangements and measures, and national actions, and highlights the strong relations that FFA has with its partners.



STRENGTHENING CAPACITY

Training with FFA is delivered in different ways including through attachments, mentoring and more formal courses. Our focus is on empowering people by strengthening capacity of Members and Secretariat staff.

During the last year, more than 45 training events were coordinated with **over 780 fisheries officers** in attendance. FFA has also provided opportunities for Members to secure recognised qualifications including Certificate IV courses at USP. This learning is enhanced by FFA's in-country training and advice for development of key workplace competencies.

The range of dedicated training provided over the past year includes Monitoring,

Control and Surveillance (MCS); Observer training; Legal training, attachments at the Secretariat; economics workshops for Fisheries Managers; training on information management systems and the training of Competent Authority personnel.

During 2018/19, training activities saw 30% female attendance and we aim to improve this in future years.

The Secretariat also forms part of the Consortium delivering the new Pacific Fisheries Leadership Programme (PFLP) with the first cohort of 23 participants beginning their course in January of this year. The Secretariat remains a key participant in the adaptive processes fine-tuning the further roll-out of this important regional initiative.

Training for our Secretariat staff is another priority. A greater focus on this is reflected in our new Strategic Plan. This past year, most Secretariat staff have had an opportunity for training or relevant workplace experience. The Secretariat will continue to develop and refine this programme.

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR DONOR PARTNERS

I sincerely thank **donor partners** for their ongoing confidence in the work of our Members and the Secretariat. The financial, technical and in-kind support provided is essential to implementation of our approved Statement of Intent 11, the related 2019/20 Annual Work Program and Budget, and our new Strategic Plan.

Our total approved budget for the coming year of **USD 32.67 million** is underpinned by this sustained confidence in both our management practices and on the focus and utility of our work.

I take this opportunity to especially thank our two metropolitan Members, **Australia and New Zealand**, whose extensive and flexible funding provides us with the foundation needed to resource the Secretariat and deliver many key programs. We could not operate without this support.

Additional project funding from New Zealand in respect of Information Technology, Economic Development, Port State Measures, the development of a Catch Documentation Scheme, the Leadership programme, and in advancing improved management of longline fisheries has been critical. Australia's additional support around the implementation of the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement (NTSA), the aerial surveillance component of the Pacific Maritime Security Program and other activities is also essential.

Previous work to restructure the **Pacific Regional Oceanscape Programme (PROP)** funded under World Bank auspices is now delivering a better defined and well-implemented regional component managed by the FFA Secretariat. We are liaising closely with those Members who are either already, or will shortly become PROP Participating Countries, to help promote the effective ongoing delivery of all PROP programme components.

I also thank the Global Environment Fund and its implementing partners UNDP and FAO for the sustained support within the **OFMP-2 Programme**. In addition to the work on Climate Change, the OFMP-2 has underpinned an eco-system based approach to its work within Fisheries Management Division, funded more Member participation in key meetings, and provided dedicated funding for the annual MCS Working Group meeting and on emerging issues such as High Seas management and transshipment at sea. The OFMP-2 has also helped underpin our overall efforts in combatting IUU fishing, including through support for work on EM and ER.

I also sincerely thank the **Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation (OFCF)** for its ongoing support for the Japan Promotion Fund and congratulate Members in agreeing to the 2019/20 activities focusing on capacity development, maritime boundaries and industry initiatives.

The **Pacific-EU Marine Partnership (PEUMP) Programme** was officially launched in September 2018 with the signing of a PAGoDA Co-Delegation Agreement between the Heads of four CROP Agencies (SPC,

FFA, SPREP, and USP) and representatives of the EU Delegation in the Pacific at the 49th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting held in Nauru.

The FFA component of the programme will further support sustainable management and development of fisheries for food security and economic growth, help address Climate Change impacts, and strengthen engagement on MCS. I also note that within the PEUMP we will also be strengthening our work together with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in respect of advocacy and with the Pacific Islands Tuna Industry Association (PITIA).

MANAGING EFFICIENTLY AND PROFESSIONALLY

It is very pleasing to report that the externally audited accounts for the Agency for the 2017/2018 year again produced an unqualified outcome, as did our management of the US Treaty funds on behalf of the Membership. We have also ensured successful recruitment and management of our staff, as detailed in the annexes to this Report.

I record with sincere thanks the professional support of the Deputy Director General Matthew Hooper. His strategic engagement and leadership has provided strong support for our work together to ensure that the Secretariat is as responsive as possible to Members' needs and priorities.

I also sincerely thank the Directors and all the staff - at all levels of our Secretariat - for their tireless and dedicated service to the FFA and to the region. I am strongly dedicated to making use of the resources and opportunities now available to enhance staff skills and experience at all levels. I thank Members for proposals already agreed to ensure we remain a socially responsible employer that values staff and their families.

CONCLUSION

The convergence of events currently shaping our world means the fisheries sector faces more challenges now than at any time previously. Yet, the opportunities before us are also significant.

In this, my first year as Director General, I give Members a commitment that the Secretariat will be unfailingly focussed on pursuing all available opportunities for the benefit of the Pacific people we serve, while assisting the Membership to address any issues that impinge on our capacity to operate sustainable and economically viable fisheries.

Always our goal will be to ensure our work makes an enduring positive difference in the lives of the Membership and at each step of the way, cooperation and empowerment will be the foundations on which we deliver progress.

I commend this Annual Report to Members and other stakeholders and look forward to serving with the Secretariat team into 2020 and beyond.

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Celebrating 40 years of Cooperation

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