

08 November 2021

IOTC CIRCULAR 2021-74

Dear Madam/Sir,

PARTNERING THE 2ND PHASE OF THE GEF-FAO COMMON OCEANS ABNJ PROJECT ON SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF TUNA FISHERIES AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION

The second phase of the GEF-FAO ABNJ Common Oceans Project on *Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction* to be implemented under GEF-7 funding is expected to commence around the middle of 2022.

As you will recall, the Commission benefitted both directly from the first phase of the project through its support to the IOTC MSE process; capacity development workshops and compliance support missions; development of the CLAV and the e-PSM application; and indirectly through a wide range of other activities (on topics such as CDS and EMS) that took place in the other tuna-RFMOs.

A short narrative that identifies some of the successes of phase 1 is provided in Annex 1 below.

In 2017, the Commission noted that the development of a second phase of the ABNJ Project was underway and encouraged CPCs to contribute inputs to the development process. The Commission also endorsed ongoing collaboration with the ABNJ Tuna Project.

The FAO and partners are close to submitting the Project Document to GEF for their review and endorsement. The project activities are grouped into three main components:

Component 1: Strengthened management of tuna fisheries

Component 2: Strengthened MCS to improve fisheries data, compliance with CMMs and to tackle IUU fishing

Component 3: Reduction of environmental impacts of tuna fisheries

A short narrative that provides a view of the plans for phase 2 is provided in Annex 1 below.

To finalise the project document, as was case for the first phase project, participating institutions are being asked to indicate their agreement with the co-financing arrangements. These arrangements require that the participating institutions pledge to support project, either financially or as in-kind contribution (i.e., in the form of staff time, office space, etc).

In phase one of the Common Oceans ABNJ-Tuna project, the in-kind contribution from IOTC was the sum of relevant portions of the annual budget for the 5 years of the project. For the second phase of the project, it is proposed that in-kind contribution would be calculated in the same way. In addition, it is being proposed by the project development team that FAO would be the implementing agency and IOTC, via a Project Management Unit located in the Fisheries Division at FAO Headquarters, would act as a nominal executing facility. In the proposed arrangement IOTC would not be required to invest any budget and staff time for this purpose would be kept to a minimum.

Distribution

IOTC Contracting Parties: Australia, Bangladesh, China, Comoros, Eritrea, European Union, France (Territories), India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Rep of), Japan, Kenya, Rep. of Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, United Rep. of Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom, Yemen. **Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties:** Senegal. **Intergovernmental Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations.** **Chairperson IOTC.** **Copy to:** FAO Headquarters, FAO Representatives to CPCs.

This message has been transmitted by email only

I am seeking to confirm the support of the IOTC Members to send FAO a letter of endorsement as drafted in Annex 2. As the time for the start of the project is fast approaching, if I do not receive any objections from the Members by 21 November 2021, I will duly inform FAO that the Commission has agreed to support the second phase of the GEF-FAO Common Oceans ABNJ Project on *Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction*.

More information on both phases of the Project can be found [\[here\]](#).

Action Required: Heads of delegations to consider the information provided in this circular and, if necessary, provide objections to partnering with the second phase of the GEF-FAO Common Oceans ABNJ Project on *Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction* to the IOTC Executive Secretary by midnight Seychelles time on 21 November 2021.

Yours sincerely



Christopher O'Brien

Executive Secretary

Attachments:

- Appendix 1 & 2

COMMON OCEANS TUNA PROJECT by FAO's Tuna II Team

The initial Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project (Tuna I) aimed at supporting sustainable and efficient tuna fisheries production and biodiversity conservation through the systematic application of an ecosystem approach. Tuna I was a five-year project (2014-20) supported by a GEF grant of about 27 million USD, and it drew together a large and diverse group of stakeholders – from consumers and industry to all tuna RFMOs, NGOs and international organizations – that play important roles in tuna fisheries.

Tuna I contributed to the strengthening of the tuna management process by supporting tuna RFMOs member countries through 23 different activities, covering diverse areas such as technical support and training to improve the process for decision making via the development and adoption of harvest strategies and the implementation of the EAFM; strengthening compliance and the ability of RFMO member countries to combat IUU fishing; and working with the private sector to mitigate negative impacts of tuna fishing on the environment. Support was also provided to foster cooperation, exchange of experiences and lessons learned across tuna RFMOs through different mechanisms like joint meetings on bycatch, FADs, technical aspects of the implementation of the precautionary approach, EAFM and the establishment of a Tuna Compliance Network.

The final independent evaluation of Tuna I was highly positive in its assessment of the project's results, some of which were described as transformative. The evaluation considered that the large and diverse partnership was one of the strengths of the project, contributing significantly to the delivery and co-financing of project outputs. The advancement of tuna fisheries management in these years has been significant, even though it is not always possible to precisely assess how much of this progress can be attributed to the project itself. However, through collaboration with partners, including t-RFMOs, industry, and civil society, the project had a catalytic effect helping to disseminate and to showcase the benefits of innovative approaches, to boost compliance improvement efforts and demonstrated some of the results that can ensue from the use of good bycatch management practices.

While successes in Tuna I were significant, there remains much to be done in terms of consolidating these gains, upscaling proven approaches and tools leading to sustainable management of tuna stocks and supporting emerging technologies. Recognizing this opportunity, in June 2020, the GEF Council approved a second phase of the project (Tuna II) with a total GEF grant of 14.4 million USD.

The objectives of the Tuna II are consistent with the goals described in a Theory of Change, developed in consultation with the partners, that describes how the Project is expected to address issues still affecting tuna fisheries management.

In consultation with tuna RFMOs and other partners, over the past year and a half, we have been developing the final Project proposed activities to be submitted for GEF endorsement by the end of the year. Tuna II focuses on four main components: 1) Strengthening management of tuna fisheries by fostering collaboration across RFMOs; 2) Strengthened Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) to improve fisheries data, compliance with CMMs and to tackle IUU fishing; 3) Better assessment and reduction, where needed, of environmental impacts of tuna fisheries; and 4) Knowledge Management, Communication and Monitoring and Evaluation. Our intent for Tuna II is to build upon successes and fill gaps identified at the end of Tuna I.

The overall strategies are based on promoting good practices through appropriate incentives, in particular, market incentives rewarding sustainability with support and participation of the private sector. Innovative approaches to data collection, monitoring and compliance and better bycatch mitigations will be demonstrated and business cases developed creating opportunities for further replication and uptake as future additional funding materializes. Capacity building, especially for officers in developing States, will be reinforced with the creation of online courses accessible in various languages, with possibility of complementing them with in-person activities as the pandemic concerns ease in the future.

Specific activities under Tuna II will include:

- Further capacity building for continuing development of harvest strategies through virtual workshops, and online documentation and e-learning.
- Supporting development of explicit EAFM objectives and implementation plans
- Assessment of climate change impacts on tuna fisheries
- Support for collaboration through joint tuna RFMO technical Working Groups on topics of global relevance
- Support for the development of Fishery Improvement Plans (FIPs) in Pacific SIDS
- Extension and up-scaling of MCS certification-based online and field training courses based on the successful Tuna I Certificate IV in Fisheries Enforcement and Compliance course
- Compliance support missions and PSMA training in the Atlantic Ocean
- Continued support for the Tuna Compliance Network established under Tuna I to develop recommendations and methodology for best practices for compliance assessments
- Extension of the ICCAT online data management system with an emphasis on development of extensions for automatic data interoperability for the potential benefit of all t-RFMOs
- Support to formalize standards and protocols for uptake of electronic monitoring (using cameras) and electronic reporting in tuna fishing fleets
- Support to developing coastal states face in the implementation of electronic monitoring for tuna fleets in the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic Oceans
- Case study on traceability to identify, study and evaluate the minimal CDS support mechanisms required for a forthcoming IOTC CDS as a compliance tool
- Piloting e-traceability systems in a small-scale tuna fisheries context to demonstrate feasibility in small-scale fisheries in eastern Africa
- Development and implementation of tools and processes for a regional shark fishery sampling program in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and South Western Atlantic
- Demonstrations of alternatives to gillnets and improvements to handline and/or pole-and-line tuna value chains in pilot locations in the Indian Ocean
- Scaling up of sub-surface setting of gillnets in the Indian Ocean to reduce bycatch
- Development of draft policies to mitigate FAD impacts on the environment and advocate for their adoption at t- RFMO
- Further development of mitigation techniques applying acoustic signals in FAD fishing
- Development of a draft policy on a holistic approach to bycatch management that considers existing knowledge about bycatch mitigation actions
- Educational outreach, capacity-building, and technical innovation to enhance implementation and improve management and monitoring systems for of seabird bycatch mitigation measures by CCSBT Members
- Develop and test innovative tools and approaches to monitor and manage address cetacean bycatch in tuna fisheries at the national and regional scale
- Continuation of and extension of skippers' workshops for purse seine, long line and pole and line fishers to promote and disseminate best practices for bycatch mitigation methods
- Fisheries stakeholder surveys to allow for global estimates of gear loss in tuna fisheries

The activities of the Project will be subject to the same principles that guided the Tuna I implementation: complement existing efforts and avoid duplication; implementation of activities will be in the hands of the executing partners; support collaboration between partners, especially across tuna RFMOs and south-south cooperation; the benefits of activities will extend globally when possible, even when activities are regional or national, focusing on developing States whenever possible; gender balance and equality will be promoted. The tuna RFMO Secretariats will participate in the Steering Committee for the project, bringing the concerns and guidance from their memberships as was the case in Tuna I, to guide Project activities and ensure the Project activities are supportive of tuna RFMO goals.

As it was the case during the Tuna I, the Tuna II will be part of a Program that involves three other projects: a project on deep-sea fisheries, a project on multi-sectoral cooperation in the ABNJ, and a project on multi-sectoral management in the Sargasso Sea. These four technical projects will produce lessons and experiences that will contribute to the future of the ABNJ sustainable utilization.

Partner co-financing, primarily as in-kind contributions, is an important ingredient in gaining GEF endorsement for Tuna II. For Tuna I, partner co-finance was substantial and contributed greatly to the successes achieved. For Tuna II, GEF will expect a co-finance ratio of 10:1, which equates to a 150 million USD co-finance projection over the 5-year project life span (2022-2027). For this reason, we are again soliciting co-finance commitment letters from our partners to secure GEF endorsement for the project. As in Tuna I, co-finance in the form of in-kind and direct cash contributions are being solicited. In-kind contributions may include normal, ongoing activities our partners undertake in support of the objectives of Tuna II (Strengthened management of tuna fisheries, strengthened MCS to improve fisheries data, compliance with CMMs and to tackle IUU fishing, Reduction of environmental impacts of tuna fisheries, and Communications and M&E on these topics).

APPENDIX 2.

Senior Coordinator, GEF Unit

DATE

Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome,

ITALY

Subject: Confirmation of co-financing for the GEF Project 'Sustainable management of tuna fisheries and biodiversity conservation in the areas beyond national jurisdiction' and Project Symbol GCP/GLO/1000/GFF

Dear Madam/Sir,

I have the pleasure to confirm that the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, accepts to co-finance the GEF-FAO Common Oceans ABNJ Project on *Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction* through our activities in 2022-2027.

The IOTC support to the project is an in-kind contribution of approximately USD 11.76 million over the period of 2022-2027. Support will be in the form of in-kind contribution for a) staff time for activities, included in the work plan of IOTC; b) office space and c) expenses for IOTC operations which are of direct relevance to the project.

The component-wise split is as follows:

Component	USD Amount	Type of Co-financing
1: Strengthened management of tuna fisheries	3.92 m	in-kind
2: Strengthened MCS to improve fisheries data, compliance with CMMs and to tackle IUU fishing	3.92 m	in-kind
3: Reduction of environmental impacts of tuna fisheries	3.92 m	in-kind
4: Knowledge Management, Communication and Monitoring and Evaluation	0	in-kind
5: Project Management Costs (equal to 5% of the co-financing)	0	in-kind

It is assumed that our participation in the above-mentioned programme will not entail any supplementary workload or cost for IOTC beyond those already being carried out to achieve the objectives of IOTC.

IOTC reserves the right to not disclose any confidential data without the prior and explicit authorization of the concerned Contracting Party or Cooperating non-Contracting Party.

The in-kind contribution from IOTC will be managed by the Secretariat as a contribution to the project components to be implemented in the IOTC Area of Competence and to support the participation of IOTC in project activities.

The project will keep IOTC Members informed on the progress of project implementation of the project through regular reporting.

Yours sincerely

Executive Secretary