

West Pacific East Asia Oceanic Fisheries Management Final Independent Evaluation Report

January 2013

Executive Summary

The evaluation	<p>The objective of this evaluation of the West Pacific East Asia Oceanic Fisheries Management Project (WPEA Project) is to enable the GEF, UNDP and UNOPS to assess the project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.</p> <p>The evaluation work commenced on 26 November 2012 and continued for 30 days, including a 10 day trip to Manila. All field work for the evaluation occurred in Manila during a series of meetings related to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).</p>
Evaluation methodology	<p>The Manila meetings enabled face-to-face interviews with many of the government project stakeholders in the three countries covered by the WPEA Project. In addition, it was possible to carry out discussions with WCPFC staff, UNDP staff, several of the consultants employed by the project, staff of relevant NGOs, specialists in monitoring/assessing Pacific tuna stocks, individuals involved in tuna fisheries from countries adjacent to the three project countries, and people closely involved in implementing a related GEF/UNDP project in the Pacific Islands. The interviews at the Manila fisheries meetings were subsequently complemented by telephone interviews with key people.</p> <p>Much of the analysis of this evaluation involved examining each of the seven stated outcomes of the project with respect to several factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The key activities in support of achieving the outcome• The associated logframe indicators/outputs• Relevance• Effectiveness• Efficiency• Long-term impact of project on the outcome
Background context of project	<p>The major threats to the globally significant tuna stocks in the western and central Pacific Ocean and their associated ecosystems are: (a) A high and expanding tuna catch in the area but incomplete scientific knowledge to make accurate assessments, with insufficient data from Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam being especially critical; (b) Fisheries governance mechanisms in the region which may be unable to prevent overfishing; and (c) Ineffective international coordination in fisheries management, at least partially due to insufficient participation by the three countries in the WCPFC.</p> <p>It has long been recognized that a major constraint for the accurate assessment of stocks in the entire western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) is the lack of good data from the far western Pacific. The Scientific Committee of the WCPFC, which reviews stock assessments of the major species in the region, has repeatedly noted that the incomplete catch, effort and biological data for the Indonesia and Philippines components of the fishery remain the single largest source of uncertainty in assessing WCPO tuna, a major issue considering the global importance of those fish stocks. Although obtaining better data from Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam would permit the Commission to make better stock assessments in the larger WCPO area, it is critically important that those three countries develop management processes and institutions for their own purposes, such as resource conservation, food security, and economic development.</p>

Summary of project The WPEA Project, funded by the GEF and several co-financing partners, is executed by UNOPS and WCPFC. It is aimed at building capacity in Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam to fully engage in regional initiatives to conserve and manage fisheries for highly migratory fish stocks, by addressing tuna catch data gaps in the tuna fisheries of the WCPO, and by addressing compliance shortfalls through reforming policy, legal and institutional arrangements as per the various requirements of the WCPFC.

The objective of the WPEA Project was established to be: *“To strengthen national capacities and international cooperation on priority transboundary concerns relating to the conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks in the west Pacific Ocean and east Asia (Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam)”*.

To accomplish this objective the project was designed to encompass two main areas: (1) monitoring, data enhancement and fishery assessment, and (2) policy, institutional strengthening and fishery management.

Rating the achievement of the project’s stated outcomes

Using relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency as criteria, each of the seven outcomes established for the WPEA Project were rated on a scale given in the evaluation’s terms of reference. The results of this rating are:

1. Improved knowledge of oceanic fish stocks and related ecosystems: “highly satisfactory”.
2. Reduced uncertainty in stock assessments: “highly satisfactory”.
3. National capacities in oceanic fishery monitoring and assessment strengthened: “highly satisfactory”.
4. Participant countries contributing to management of shared migratory stocks: “highly satisfactory”.
5. National laws, policies and institutions strengthened to implement applicable global and regional instruments: “highly satisfactory” for the Philippines, and “satisfactory” for Indonesia and Vietnam.
6. Key stakeholders participating in the project: “highly satisfactory”.
7. National capacities in oceanic fisheries management strengthened: “highly satisfactory”.

Overall effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance

In examining effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance across all project outcomes, the evaluation concludes:

- The project has been extremely effective at achieving the outcomes established in the project document, certainly surpassing what could have been expected prior to the start of the project. The only disappointment involved the knowledge management systems – but this was to support an outcome that was effectively achieved by other means.
- With respect to efficiency of achieving the seven outcomes, the project was very cost effective. An important cost efficiency aspect of the WPEA Project that repeatedly emerged in the evaluation was taking advantage of experience of setting up similar monitoring and management programmes in the Pacific Islands area.
- A notable feature about outcomes established for the WPEA Project is that they were and remain all highly relevant to the country priorities. To a degree, the high relevancy was due to the talent of the architects of the WPEA project document, not the least of which is balancing country priorities with funding institution requirements.

Sustainability of outcomes

The evaluation examined each outcome from the perspective of sustainability. For two of the project outcomes, the risk to their sustainability is currently low. For others, the risk to sustainability is likely to be low at the conclusion of a planned follow-up project.

Major achievements of the project	<p>Major achievements were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The remarkable progress made in moving towards almost all of the outcomes • The generation of awareness on the part of government decision makers of the importance of monitoring/assessing the tuna resources and of participation in the WCPFC management process • Movement on bringing the tuna fisheries in the three project countries into an improved international management regime covering the entire WCPO
Major shortcomings of the project	<p>The major shortcomings were related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project's monitoring and evaluation system • The establishment of a knowledge management system
Important factors facilitating achievement	<p>The most important factors facilitating achievement appear to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very sound project document – a manifestation of diligent planning for the project by a very competent team • The complementary skills, experience, and personalities of the Project Manager and the Technical Adviser, especially the knowledge of the Adviser and the persistence of the Manager • The association with WCPFC, which had much to do with establishing stature and credibility to the project • The respect for, and competence of, the international consultants • The use of experience from carrying out similar work in the Pacific Islands • Appropriate support from the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor
Factors impeding achievement	<p>The most important factors impeding achievement appear to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The short project period of three years, bearing in mind that a similar project in the Pacific Islands covered 11 years. • Although there was substantial co-financing for the project, the fact that much of it was promised, rather than secured, meant that it was difficult to plan for activities to be supported by that funding. • In the project document, (a) the lines of communication and responsibility were not very clear, and (b) the knowledge management component was not well-articulated.
Monitoring and evaluation system	<p>Although the project did have an M&E system and the M&E arrangements agreed at the project's Inception Workshop were followed, the project does not appear to meet the minimum M&E requirements established by GEF and UNDP.</p>
Project management	<p>The day to day management of the WPEA Project was effective – especially considering that the Project Manager position is part-time and the isolation of the WCPFC office from the three project countries. Factors contributing to the effective management appear to be the attitude of the Project Manager, the sound administrative/finance procedures of the WCPFC, and ready access to the UNDP Regional Technical Adviser (for funding agency and admin matters), to the WPEA Project Technical Adviser (for tuna monitoring/management matters), and to the Oceanic Fisheries Programme of the SPC (for tuna data and stock assessment matters).</p>
Conclusion on project formulation	<p>The project was very well-formulated, as evidenced by the quality of the project document. As expressed by one stakeholder in the region: “the right medicine at the right time”. It appears that these favorable project preparations could be largely attributed to an appropriate skill mixture in the design team, especially having individuals with GEF experience, regional knowledge, and a great amount of technical expertise in tuna monitoring and management.</p>

Conclusion on project implementation

Project implementation was reasonably smooth, with an absence of major difficulties, as evidenced by the discussions at the Project Steering Committee. Minor difficulties were expected, encountered, and effectively dealt with. The day to day management of the project was effective, with responsible factors being the attitude of the Project Manager, the administrative infrastructure of the WCPFC, and ready access to administrative and technical support from very competent individuals.

Conclusion on project results

Overall, it is concluded that the WPEA Project has made substantial progress towards its objective. The national capacities of the three project countries and their associated international cooperation in the management of fisheries are certainly far stronger now than when the project began

Recommendations

Recommendations mirroring the above points are put forward in three categories: (1) good practices of the WPEA Project that could be useful to GEF and UNDP in the design of future projects, (2) Recommendations useful in implementing similar projects, and (3) Those related to a follow-up project.

Key lessons learned

The main lessons learned that could be applicable to other projects are:

- A good project document, being the manifestation of good planning, can lay a solid foundation for the subsequent success of the project.
- A baseline study (in this case status reports on national tuna fisheries) can evolve into a very useful product which can be significant, durable, and effectively serve several purposes.
- For best results, the best must be hired: project managers should strive to obtain consultant input of the highest quality, rather than that which is just adequate.
- For hard-to-achieve outcomes, the best approach could be to attack the issue early in the life of the project and constantly focus attention on the issue through a variety of interventions over an extended period.
- Knowledge management is a specialty that requires certain skills and experience that not everybody has (just as, for example, fishery stock assessment) - and professional advice may be required for effective knowledge management in a complex multi-country project.