


FFA

FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE
ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEENTH MEETING

Virtual
11 - 14 May 2021

Agenda Item:	x
Paper Number:	FFC118-INFO.12
Title:	Examining the Contribution of Tuna Fisheries to Regional Food Security

Summary:

This paper provides an update on work being done on the contribution of tuna fisheries to regional food security, noting that the focus of current work is obtaining estimates of landings to local markets from transshipment activities. Once this study has been completed the next stage of the work will be to collate the results of the study as well as previous studies and other available data to obtain an overall estimate of the total supply of tuna into local markets. A further study, as approved by FFC114, will be undertaken examining potential ways in which tuna fisheries and associated industries can increase their contribution to food security and the policies required to achieve this. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by June 2022.

Recommendations:

The meeting is invited to note the current work being undertaken, and proposed future work, on the contribution of tuna fisheries to regional food security.

Examining the Contribution of Tuna Fisheries to Regional Food Security

Introduction:

1. In 2015 FFC Fisheries Ministers developed a 'Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries' which was endorsed by Forum Leaders. The roadmap set ambitious goals for a 10-year period, and the process includes an annual report card which tracks progress through a number of key indicators. Data for most of these indicators are already collected by FFA (with SPC providing information on stock status) and published annually in the 'Economic Development Indicators and Statistics (EDIS)' report. However, there remains a gap with respect to Tuna Fisheries Roadmap Goal 4 which envisages an increase in the supply of tuna for domestic consumption of 40,000 tonnes across the region by 2024. Achieving this target would make a substantial contribution to increasing food security in Pacific Island Countries.

2. Tuna for domestic consumption comes from four main sources:

- i. Canned (mainly dark meat) tuna which is produced by local and overseas canneries and supplied to Pacific Island Countries.
- ii. Catches from small-scale artisanal fishing operations.
- iii. Landings from local and locally based purse seine, pole and line, and longline fishing vessels which are provided for local consumption, rather than being processed and/or exported.
- iv. Purse seine and longline tuna and by-catch landed from foreign vessels during transshipment operations – this makes an important contribution in a number of urban centres, but the trade is mainly 'informal' which creates difficulties in collecting data.

Background:

3. A number of studies have been conducted in recent years examining the contribution to food security related to tuna fisheries, including:

- A 2019 study that estimated that in 2016 around 29,000mt of the catch of locally based fleets in the region entered local markets, which is equivalent to only 0.8 % of the total catch taken by these vessels. However, for some FFA members a significant proportion of the catch of locally based commercial fleets is supplied to local markets. For example, in 2016, this proportion was estimated at 95% for the Cook Islands, 33% for Samoa, 25% for Tonga, and 8% for Palau. In addition, many countries have programmes to increase tuna catches by artisanal fleets (mainly by provision of anchored Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)).
- Another study indicated the importance of canned tuna to local markets, with annual consumption in the region's three largest countries ranging from 2,600 tonnes (Fiji), through to 3,000 tonnes (Solomon Islands) and 3,300 tonnes (PNG) – equivalent to 22,000 tonnes of whole tuna in total.
- Catch of tuna and tuna-like species by artisanal fleets was estimated in 2016 to be around 17,500mt.

4. Work on estimating the volume of tuna and bycatch entering domestic markets associated with transshipment activities commenced in December 2020. This study is expected to be completed by the end of June this year, noting that travel restrictions due to Covid19 have complicated the collection of data, thus delaying the completion of this study.

Key Issues:

5. Once the transshipment study has been completed the next stage of this work will be to collate the results of this study as well as previous studies and other available data to obtain an overall estimate of the total supply of tuna into local markets.
6. A further study, as approved by FFC114, will be undertaken examining potential ways in which tuna fisheries and associated industries can increase their contribution to food security and the associated policies required to achieve this. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by June 2022.