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WCPFC Secretariat



**2020 Annual Report of the Executive Director
of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. This report is provided pursuant to Rule 13 of the Commission’s Rules of Procedure. It highlights the main work programmes and activities of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and its Secretariat in 2020. The report has a new structure that describe distinctively the work of the Commission through the engagements of Members, Cooperating Non-Members and Participating Territories (CCMs) and its subsidiary bodies and those activities attributable directly to the Commission Secretariat. The new structure also allows the Secretariat to report on the implementation of the Corporate Plan for the Secretariat accepted by the Commission at WCPFC16 as an internal planning document to guide the work of the Secretariat.

2. **Figure 1** below purports to graphically illustrate the major activities of the Commission and those of the Secretariat in 2020.

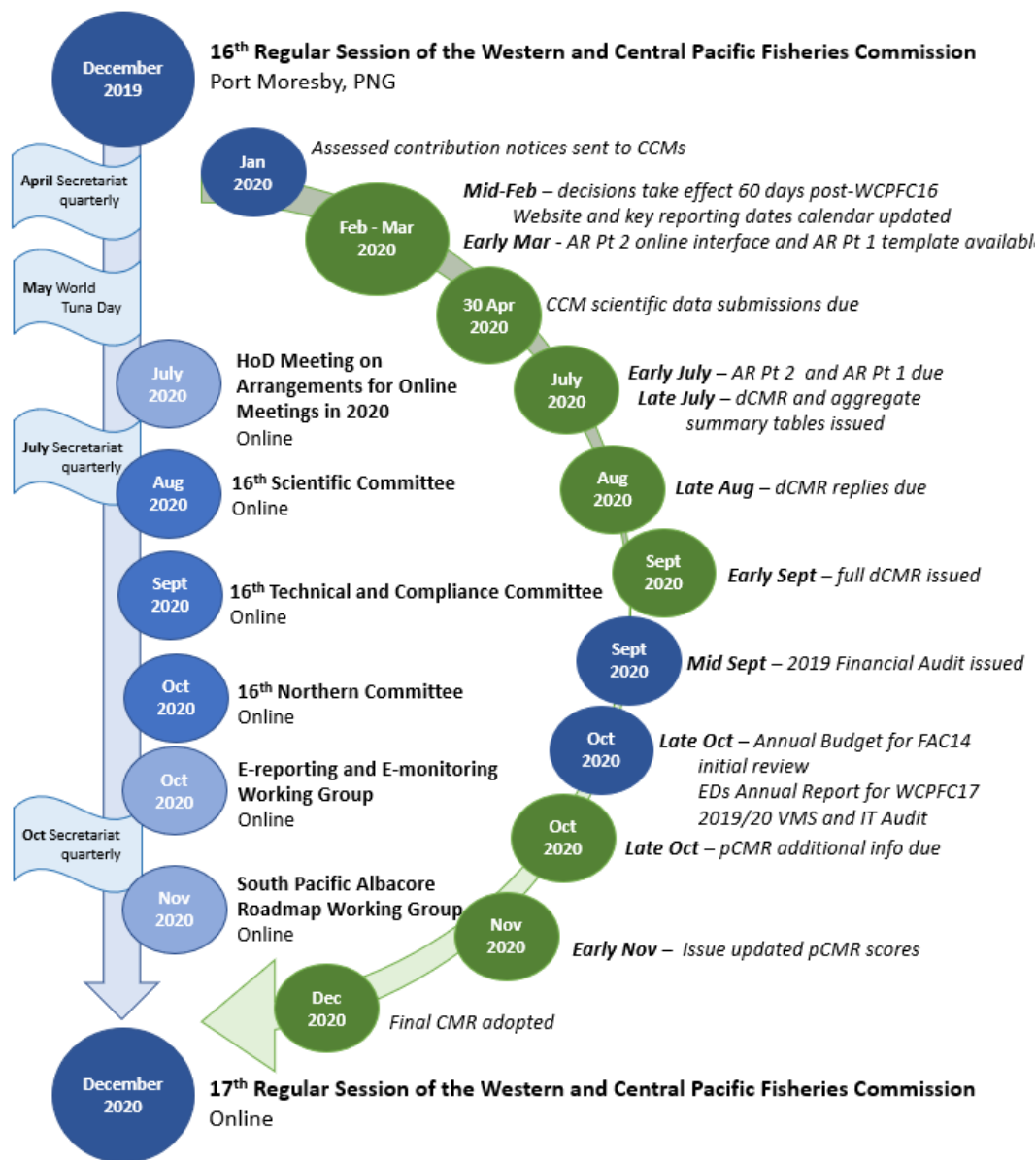


Figure 1 – Major activities of the Commission in 2020

3. The suite of activities and engagements of the Commission and the Secretariat in 2020 as depicted in Figure 1 above bear testament to the busy schedule and heavy workload the Commission carried with the support of the Secretariat during the reporting year despite the unprecedented disruptions caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Under the challenging circumstances and the constraints of transacting business and meetings online, the Commission and its subsidiary bodies as supported by the Secretariat had a reasonably successful year. Ultimately, they were able to complete the necessary preparations, and provide the requisite advice and information the Commission requires to inform its key decisions in December 2020 that the Commission must take to ensure continuity of the Commission's operations and functions in 2021 and onward years and to ensure there is no avoidable gaps in the WCPFC conservation and management regime going forward. The highlights for the reporting period are documented in the succeeding sections of this report.

2. WORK OF THE COMMISSION AND SUBSIDIARY BODIES

4. The Commission has four subsidiary bodies through which the bulk of the work of the Commission is transacted. The subsidiary bodies include the Scientific Committee, Northern Committee, Technical and Compliance Committee, and the Finance and Administration Committee. Their annual meetings in 2020, as usual, were scheduled in advance of the annual session of the Commission (WCPFC17). All the meetings of the subsidiary bodies in 2020 were convened electronically as a consequence of the disruptions to international travels caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, the annual WCPFC17 meeting will also be convened electronically in December 2020. The outcomes and recommendations of the meetings of the subsidiary bodies will be tabled and considered for decision by the Commission at WCPFC17.

2.1 WCPFC 16

5. The annual meeting of the Commission in 2019 (WCPFC16) was held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, from 5 to 11 December 2019. It was the first meeting presided over by the new Commission Chair; Ms Jung-re Riley Kim (Korea), whose term as Commission Chair commenced in December 2018 at the end of the WCPFC15 meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA. The WCPFC16 met for 6 days instead of the usual 5 days to provide additional time for the Commission to progress discussion and implementation of the Work Plan for the Adoption of Harvest Strategies under CMM 2014-06.

6. The key outcomes of the WCPFC16 include:
- a. conferral of cooperating non-member status for 2020 to Curacao, Ecuador, El Salvador, Liberia, Nicaragua, Panama, Thailand and Vietnam;
 - b. adoption of an IUU Vessel List for 2020, consisting of the same three fishing vessel from previous years;
 - c. adoption of a final compliance monitoring report for 2019 covering 2018 activities;
 - d. adoption of a conservation and management measure for the compliance monitoring scheme to extend the scheme for another two years;
 - e. adoption of a Resolution on Climate Change as it relates to the WCPFC;
 - f. adoption of a package of bycatch mitigation measures including:
 - i. a comprehensive conservation and management measure for sharks to come into force on 1 November 2020 replacing the suite of shark measures previously in force;

- ii. a measure for the conservation and management of mobulid rays caught in association with fisheries in the WCPO convention area; and
- iii. safe handling and release guidelines for seabirds.
- g. adoption of an interim rebuilding plan for the North Pacific striped marlin;
- h. approval of the budget for 2020 and endorsement of indicative budget estimates for 2021 and 2022; and
- i. acceptance of the Secretariat Corporate Plan as an internal planning document to guide the work of the Secretariat;

7. The Commission at WCPFC16 also approved a substantial work programme for 2020 and onward years for Members, subsidiary bodies, the scientific services provider and the Secretariat. The work programme include:

- a. various taskings to the Science Committee and the Scientific Service Provider on matters relating to progressing the discussion and implementation of the Work Plan to develop harvest strategies under CMM 2014-06 including work on management strategy evaluation, and target reference points for tropical tuna stocks;
- b. negotiation of a successor measure for the management of the tropical tuna stocks of bigeye, skipjack and yellowfin;
- c. consideration of hard limits and allocation of such limits for the high seas purse seine fishery and the longline bigeye fishery;
- d. revisit the issue of limit reference point for the South Pacific striped marlin;
- e. evaluation in 2021 by SC17 of the long-term future status of the southwest Pacific swordfish stock; and
- f. progressing intersessionally targeted work through working groups on the following areas:
 - i. reforms to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the compliance monitoring scheme including the streamlining of annual reporting; the development of audit points; and enhancing the participation of observers in CMS processes (CMS working group);
 - ii. review data gaps in VMS reporting (VMS working group);
 - iii. continue review of the transshipment measure (Transshipment review working group);
 - iv. development of a roadmap for effective conservation and management of the South Pacific albacore stock (SPA Roadmap working group);
 - v. progress development of electronic monitoring standards (ERandEM working group);
 - vi. consideration of non-entangling FADs (FAD management options working group); and
 - vii. work on the flow of observer reports (TCC observer related working group).

8. The Commission at WCPFC16 decided for its annual meeting in 2020 (WCPFC17) to be convened over 7 days to provide additional time for extended discussions on harvest strategy issues and hard limits and allocation for the high seas purse seine fishery and the longline bigeye fishery.

2.2 Intersessional activities of the Commission in 2020

9. Although the majority of the Member countries situated within the western and central Pacific Ocean, in particular the small island developing countries are largely COVID-19 free, their fishing industries have not been spared the adverse impacts of the global pandemic.

Those impacts continue to be assessed, particularly considering the heavy economic reliance of Pacific small island developing States on the tuna fishery.

10. As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission in April took three decisions to suspend temporarily certain observer coverage requirements, namely the requirements for observer coverage on purse seine vessels set out in paragraphs 34 and 35 of CMM 2018-01 and CMM 2018-05, the requirements under paragraphs 13 and 25 of CMM 2009-06 as they relate to observer coverage during at-sea transshipment and in-port transshipment for purse seine vessels respectively. The temporary suspensions were accompanied by various conditions under which the suspensions would operate and were initially in effect until 31 May 2020, then extended to 31 July 2020, again extended to 31 October 2020 and very recently until 15 February 2021.

11. In order to facilitate taking those intersessional decisions, the Chair of the Commission, Ms Jung-re Riley Kim, proposed an expedited procedure according to which proposals were circulated for decision with responses requested from Members within 7 days. No Member objected to the expedited procedure which has to date been used for each decision to extend the temporary suspensions in response to COVID-19. Members have consistently demonstrated willingness to be pragmatic and flexible in addressing the unprecedented circumstances. The Commission used the novel procedure which responded to the need for urgent decision-making so that States were not put in the position of breaching their international obligations. It addressed the requirement for decisions to become binding 60 days after adoption by endorsing decisions which suspended the operation of obligations, clarifying the basis on which such suspensions would operate, and by not introducing new conservation and management measures. In this manner, the Commission sought to maintain the integrity of its rules, while considering the exigencies of the COVID-19 pandemic.

12. In the absence of any specific WCPFC guidelines to guide the conduct of online meetings, the Commission held on the 15 July 2020 an online special Heads of Delegation (HOD) meeting with the explicit mandate to provide guidance on meeting arrangements for all online Commission-like meetings in 2020. The outcomes of the HOD meeting was conveyed through the Chair's Statement which was distributed via Circular 2020/68 of 16 July 2020, providing guidance on agenda setting, meeting format and schedule, and meeting protocols. The expedited procedure for decision-making was also used throughout 2020 to facilitate each decision by the Commission to not convene a physical meeting of each subsidiary body and for the WCPFC17, and to task the Secretariat in collaboration with the relevant Chair and Vice-Chair to convene online meetings taking into account the outcomes of the HOD meeting of 15 July 2020.

2.3 *The Scientific Committee*

13. The Scientific Committee (SC) was established to ensure the Commission obtains for its consideration the best scientific information available.

14. The Sixteenth Regular Session of the Scientific Committee (SC16) was held electronically using the Zoom platform for six days from 12 to 19 August 2020. As agreed, the abbreviated agenda consisted of essential items necessary to progress the scientific work of the Commission and to provide the necessary scientific advice and information to inform the key decisions of the Commission in its annual meeting in December 2020 (WCPFC17). The plenary meeting was supplemented by an online discussion forum

(<https://forum.wcpfc.int/>), which facilitated discussions mostly on the 2020 science projects and other items that were omitted from the SC16 abbreviated agenda but required acknowledgment by the SC16 in order to facilitate their progression in 2020.

15. Mr Ueta Faasili, Jr. (Samoa) chaired the meeting, and six conveners facilitated theme sessions: Valerie Post (USA) for Data and Statistics Theme, Hiroshi Minami (Japan) and Keith Bigelow (USA) for Stock Assessment Theme, Robert Campbell (Australia) for Management Issues Theme, and John Annala (New Zealand) and Yonat Swimmer (USA) for Ecosystem and Bycatch Mitigation Theme sessions. Over 200 representatives from 31 CCMs and 26 inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations attended the virtual meeting.

16. The Outcomes Document for the SC16 was posted on the SC16 website (<https://www.wcpfc.int/meetings/16th-regular-session-scientific-committee>) and it includes recommendations on stock status and other key decisions. The Draft Summary Report for SC16 was circulated to all meeting participants for their review and intersessional adoption.

17. The key outcomes of the SC16 meeting include:

- a. In 2019, the provisional total catch of four key tuna species in the Convention Area was estimated at 2,961,059 mt (the highest on record), which is 81% of the total Pacific Ocean tuna catch and 55% of the global tuna catch, and the total catch value was estimated to be around USD 5.76 billion.
- b. In 2020, four stock assessments were conducted by the SPC and ISC and the brief summary of the stock status and management advice are highlighted below:

- i. *Bigeye tuna*

- The median value of spawning biomass depletion is $SB_{\text{recent}}/SB_{F=0} = 0.41$ and the median value of relative fishing mortality is $F_{\text{recent}}/F_{\text{MSY}} = 0.72$. Therefore, the stock is not overfished (100% probability for $SB/SB_{F=0} > \text{LRP}$), and likely not experiencing overfishing (87.5% probability $F < F_{\text{MSY}}$).
- SC16 recommended that as a precautionary approach the fishing mortality should not be increased from the level that maintains spawning biomass at 2012-2015 levels until the Commission can agree on an appropriate TRP.

- ii. *Yellowfin tuna*

- The median value of spawning biomass depletion $SB_{\text{recent}}/SB_{F=0} = 0.58$ and the median value of relative fishing mortality is $F_{\text{recent}}/F_{\text{MSY}} = 0.36$. Therefore, the stock is not in an overfished condition (0% probability for $SB/SB_{F=0} < \text{LRP}$) and is not experiencing overfishing (100% probability for $F < F_{\text{MSY}}$).
- SC16 provided the same recommendation as above in bigeye tuna case.

- iii. *NP albacore tuna*

SC16 noted the following ISC's conclusions on the stock status and conservation information:

- The stock is likely not overfished relative to the LRP of $20\%SB_{F=0}$, and the current fishing intensity ($F_{2015-2017} = 0.5$) is likely at or below all seven potential reference points.
- If a constant $F_{2015-2017}$ is applied, then median SB is expected to increase to 62,873 mt from the estimated SB_{2018} of 58,858 mt and there will be a low probability of falling below $20\%SB_{F=0}$ by 2028.

- iv. *Pacific bluefin tuna*

SC16 noted the following ISC's conclusions on the stock status and conservation information:

- The latest SB_{2018} was $4.5\%SB_{F=0}$, which shows that the stock is overfished relative to potential biomass-based reference points. The recent fishing mortality (2016-2018) corresponds to $F_{14\%SPR}$, that is, the $F_{2016-2018}$ is above the level producing 20% SPR.
 - Noting ongoing concerns of low stock size, overfishing, and uncertain future recruitments, the majority of CCMs urge the Commission to take a precautionary approach to the management of Pacific bluefin tuna, especially in relation to the timing of increasing catch levels.
- c. SC16 adopted the *2021-2025 Shark Research Plan* and recommended it to the Commission for endorsement. The *2021-2025 Shark Research Plan* is available at <https://www.wcpfc.int/node/46722>.
 - d. SC16 agreed that the 2021 scientific services from SPC would comprise (i) the South Pacific albacore stock assessment; (ii) the Southwest Pacific swordfish stock assessment; and (iii) additional analyses related to yellowfin tuna in preparation for the stock assessment peer review to be convened in early 2022.
 - e. SC16 reviewed SC16-MI-WP-01 (*Further consideration of candidate TRPs for bigeye and yellowfin tuna in the WCPO*) and requested SPC to undertake the analyses for bigeye and yellowfin tuna according to the criteria outlined in the table in Paragraph 82 of the SC16 Outcomes Document. SC16 also reviewed SC16-MI-WP-02 (*Updates to WCPO skipjack tuna projected stock status to inform consideration of an updated TRP*) and further requested SPC to revise the TRP as requested in Paragraph 85 of the SC16 Outcomes Document for consideration by WCPFC17.
 - f. Due to the challenges of the electronic meeting, SC16 agreed to continue discussions on technical aspects contained in the ten harvest strategy information papers (SC16-MI-IP-01 to SC16-MI-IP-10) through the WCPFC Online Discussion Forum (<https://forum.wcpfc.int/c/HS-Framework/12>).
 - g. At the Resume SC16 Meeting held virtually on 10 September 2020, the SC16 adopted SC Future Work Programme and Budget for 2021 – 2023 and forwarded it to the Commission.
 - h. SC16 recommended to the Commission that, if circumstances allow an in-person meeting to be convened, SC17 would be held in Palau during 11– 19 August 2021.

2.4 The Northern Committee

18. The Northern Committee (NC) was established to consider and make recommendations on the formulation of conservation and management measures in respect of stocks which occur mostly in the area north of 20° north parallel namely NP albacore, Pacific bluefin and NP swordfish, and on the implementation for the area north of 20° north parallel of such conservation and management measures as may be adopted by the Commission.

19. In 2020, the 16th Regular Session of the Northern Committee (NC16) was convened electronically using the Zoom platform on 8 October. Over 120 delegates attended the virtual meeting from ten Members and 12 Observer countries and agencies. Mr Masanori Miyahara (Japan) chaired the meeting.

20. Prior to the NC16 meeting, the 5th meeting of the Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group on the Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna (JWG-05) was also held electronically on 6 and 7 October 2020. The JWG-05 was co-chaired by Ms Dorothy Lowman (USA) and the NC Chair. The JWG-05 updated both WCPFC and IATTC Pacific bluefin tuna measures and recommended a revised *CMM for Pacific Bluefin Tuna* to NC16 and a revised Resolution on

Measures for the Conservation and Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean 2021 to the IATTC. The Chair of the Catch Documentation Scheme Technical Meeting, Mr. Shingo Ota (Japan), provided the progress report and noted that Japan will circulate a third draft the CMM in due course.

21. NC16 focused on the review of managing fishing effort for NP albacore fishery, adoption of the revised *CMM for Pacific Bluefin Tuna* provided by the JWG-05, and adoption of updated *Future Work Programme for the NC*. Regarding the clear guidance on reporting NP albacore catch and effort, NC16 encouraged Members to hold intersessional discussions and prepare proposals for amending CMM 2019-03 as appropriate and agreed to hold further discussions at NC17. The draft NC16 Summary Report was circulated to all CCMs and Observers after the meeting.

2.5 The Technical and Compliance Committee

22. The Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC) was established to advise the Commission on the technical aspects of implementation of conservation and management measures and compliance with such measures.

23. The Sixteenth Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC16) was convened virtually from 23 to 29 September 2020, for four-hour sessions each day (except Sunday 17th September). The meeting was chaired by Acting TCC Chair, Dr Robert Day (Canada) and over 260 delegates from thirty-five CCMs, observer organisations and the Secretariat participated in the virtual meeting. The meeting agenda due to the constraints of the online meeting platform was substantially scaled. The key outcomes of TCC16 are described in the succeeding paragraphs.

24. TCC16 established a small working group to consider Cooperating Non-Member applications for 2021, which was Chaired by Ms Emily Crigler (USA) and it commenced its work prior to TCC16 through the WCPFC online discussion forum. Its report was considered by plenary and TCC16 made recommendations on those applications to WCPFC17.

25. TCC16 committed at least three four-hour sessions to the review of the full draft Compliance Monitoring Report covering 2019 activities prepared by the Secretariat in accordance with CMM 2019-06 (Compliance Monitoring Scheme). The review continued to be held in closed session to the exclusion of observer delegations. Due to time constraints and in the absence of an agreed process, TCC16 did not consider the aggregate table summarizing the information on alleged infringements and fishery interactions drawn from the online compliance case file system as per paragraph 26(ii) of CMM 2019-06. TCC16 agreed to recommend a provisional Compliance Monitoring Report to the Commission for consideration at WCPFC17. Noting that in accordance with CMM 2019-06 on the Compliance Monitoring Scheme the Provisional Report shall be finalized at TCC and forwarded to the Commission. TCC16 also agreed which obligations CCMs could submit up to 21 days after the TCC16 meeting providing additional information to fill a data gap.

26. TCC16 received updates on progress of CMS Future Work tasks that are intended to continue to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Compliance Monitoring Scheme (as required by CMM 2019-06 paragraph 46 and TCC Workplan 2019 - 2021 priority project specific tasks). A report by the Secretariat and SPC-OFP providing updates on streamlining of annual reporting, including the trials of Annual Catch and Effort (ACE tables), was

positively received and TCC16 supported their extension. TCC16 also received a report by the Secretariat on the review of the WCPFC online compliance case file system, which confirmed a widespread desire among CCMs to have the CCFS enhanced to better meet their needs. TCC16 has tasked the Secretariat to prioritise in its 2021 workplan, the implementation of a number of improvements to the online Compliance Case File System. TCC16 affirmed the importance of all future work tasks called for in section IX of CMM 219-06 and supported prioritization of risk-based assessment framework, the development of audit points, the development of a process for TCC to consider the aggregate tables alongside the draft CMR and development of guidance on the participation of observers in the CMS Process. These ongoing efforts are expected to be progressed by CCMs in parallel under the CMS-IWG chaired by the TCC Vice-Chair, Dr Robert Day (Canada).

27. Due to time limitations, the annual reports of the WCPFC MCS Programmes administered by the Secretariat were taken as read by TCC16, and they covered the Vessel Monitoring System, Regional Observer Programme (ROP), Transshipment Monitoring, High Seas Boarding and Inspection, Record of Fishing Vessels, Eastern High Seas Pocket Special Management Area, Port State Minimum Standards, Report on the performance of the E-reporting standards and their application, Administration of Data Requests and gaps in Scientific data submissions. TCC16 recommended the establishment of a minimum pennant size for use by boarding vessels transiting from a High Seas Boarding and Inspection Vessel.

28. TCC16 received a report from the Secretariat prepared in response to Circular 2020/71 on the measures taken to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 on fishing vessels and on travel and port entry restrictions in CCMs. This included a synthesis of relevant information set out in annual reports of the WCPFC MCS Programmes relating to the implementation of the WCPFC COVID-19 Decisions. TCC16 noted with concern the different ways in which flag CCMs have implemented the authorization of at-sea transshipment for purse seine vessels and recommended that this be clarified to ensure consistent application of the intersessional decisions. TCC16 acknowledged the importance of placing observer safely back on vessels, and the need for establishing guidelines that could inform ROP providers' decision on deploying observers on vessels with appropriate protection for observers and crews, and flexibility for national laws. TCC also acknowledged the role that e-reporting and e-monitoring can play in the absence of on-board observers and the importance of progressing the intersessional work through the ERandEMWG as a priority.

29. TCC16 received progress reports from the following working groups on electronic reporting and electronic monitoring, VMS data gap review, review of the CMM 2009-06 (Transshipment CMM) and the TCC Observer -related issues.

30. TCC16 also recommended that the three vessels currently on the WCPFC IUU vessel list are maintained. One additional IUU vessel list case was placed on the Provisional IUU Vessel list that is forwarded to WCPFC17. TCC16 also recommended consideration by WCPFC17 regarding the treatment of crew on fishing vessels and to further strengthen the provisions for observer safety.

31. A full summary report of the [TCC16 meeting](#) will be posted on the Commission website by the time of WCPFC17 and the outcomes and recommendations will be discussed at WCPFC17. The Provisional Compliance Monitoring Report documentation is available to CCMs and their authorized users through the WCPFC intranet and a copy has also been posted on the secure side of the WCPFC website. In accordance with CMM 2019-06 paragraph 41,

the Secretariat will table a summary of updates to the compliance scores of CCMs on the Commission website by the time of WCPFC17.

2.6 The Finance and Administration Committee

32. The Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) is responsible for reviewing and advising the Commission on its budget and other financial and administrative requirements.

33. In 2019, the thirteenth regular session of FAC (FAC13) was held immediately prior to and throughout the course of the WCPFC16 meeting. FAC13 was chaired by Ms. Camille Movick-Inatio (FSM) with the other second co-chair position remained unfilled. The key outcomes of FAC13 include:

- a. recommended acceptance by WCPFC16 of the Auditor's Report for 2018 and General Account Fund Financial Statements;
- b. noted the financial reports on income and trust funds report provided by the Secretariat for the 2019;
- c. recommended to WCPFC16 a \$8,118,261 budget for the Commission for 2020;
- d. recommended a revision to the Special Requirements Funds (SRF) rules to allow support for attendance at the annual Commission meeting by chairs of subsidiary bodies and the Commission vice chair if they are from small island developing states without the need to report on the use of the funding support;
- e. agreed to revisit in 2020 the salary for professional staff in the context of the Triennial Salary Market Data Review; and
- f. agreed to form an informal working group to review the remuneration system for the professional staff and the Executive Director and to report back to FAC15 in 2021.

34. For the fourteenth regular session of FAC (FAC14) this year it will be held immediately prior to and as necessary throughout the course of WCPFC17. The current FAC Co-Chairs are Ms. Camille Movick-Inatio (FSM) and Michael Brakke (USA). As expected, FAC14 will consider the routine matters relating to the work programme and budget of the Commission for 2021, personnel issues and administrative matters relating to the work of the Commission and the Secretariat. The report and outcomes of FAC14 will be presented for discussion and decision at WCPFC17.

2.7 Work of the Intersessional Working Groups

35. In 2020, the following intersessional working groups were tasked by the Commission to progress their work intersessionally through either physical meetings or electronically:

- a. Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring WG;
- b. FAD Management Option IWG;
- c. SP Albacore Roadmap IWG;
- d. Compliance Monitoring Scheme IWG;
- e. IWG to review CMM 2009-06 (Transshipment CMM);
- f. VMS SWG; and the
- g. TCC Observer -related WG.

36. The status of the work of the above intersessional working groups are summarized in the succeeding paragraphs.

a. Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring Working Group

37. The Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring Working Group was established in 2014 to consider how electronic monitoring and electronic reporting technologies could benefit the work of CCMs and the Commission, in supporting the objective and implementation of the Convention. The work over prior years had focused on the development of e-reporting standards, and in 2018 the focus was shifted to e-monitoring. TCC16 received an intersessional report on progress from the Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring (ERandEM) Working Group Chair Ms Kerry Smith (Australia) and welcomed that a meeting of the working group would be held on 14 October.

38. The 4th Meeting of the WCPFC Electronic Monitoring and Electronic Monitoring Working Group (ERandEMWG4) was convened virtually using the Zoom platform on 14 October 2020. Over 120 delegates from twenty-four CCMs, observer organisations and the Secretariat participated in the virtual meeting. Ms Kerry Smith (Australia) chaired the meeting. In early 2020 a drafting group was established to progress work on the e-monitoring draft CMM proposal, and the group has considered two versions of the draft CMM. During the ERandEMWG4, the Chair introduced the draft CMM at a high level, section by section, and sought input to help resolve specific issues based on comments received through the drafting group. During the discussions it was noted that CCMs are at different stages in their implementation of e-technologies, particularly e-monitoring. Noting that some CCMs had indicated that they needed more time, the Chair confirmed that she would take comments on the draft CMM and on minimum standards after the conclusion of the ERandEMWG4 meeting. A full summary report of the [ERandEMWG4 meeting](#) will be posted on the Commission website by the time of WCPFC17 and a progress report will be provided to WCPFC17. Further work for e-monitoring at the regional level is expected to centre around three elements namely the draft CMM, draft minimum standards for e-monitoring programmes and plans for implementation.

b. FAD Management Option Intersessional Working Group

39. The Chair of the FAD Management Options Intersessional Working Group (FADMO-IWG), Mr. Jamel James (FSM), decided after extensive consultations with CCMs, to progress the work of the working group by email communications (WCPFC Circular 2020/107). The FADMO-IWG focused on two main tasks:

- a. Consideration of the report and recommendations of the 2nd Joint t-RFMO FAD Management WG and report back to the Commission on the merits and relevance for tropical tunas of those recommendations (Paragraph 366, WCPFC16 Summary Report); and
- b. Development of specific guidelines to consider the adoption of measures on the implementation of non-entangling and/or biodegradable material on FADs (Paragraph 22, CMM 2018-01).

40. Based on the FADMO-IWG schedule, its activities started on 1 October 2020 and will end on 17 November 2020. The target of this IWG is to produce an IWG report together with two papers to address the above tasks and to submit this report to WCPFC17.

c. SP Albacore Roadmap Intersessional Working Group

41. The IWG Chair, Ms Mere Lakeba (Fiji), has announced that the IWG will have a virtual meeting on Friday, 13 November 2020 (WCPFC Circular No. 2020/123). The provisional agenda has been posted on the IWG website: <https://www.wcpfc.int/meetings/south-pacific-albacore-roadmap-intersessional-working-group>. A progress report will be provided to WCPFC17.

d. Compliance Monitoring Scheme Intersessional Working Group

42. The Compliance Monitoring Scheme IWG was established in 2019, under the leadership of the Vice-Chair of TCC, Dr Robert Day (Canada) which would work virtually to progress work intersessionally to undertake the CMS Future Work, including audit points and the risk-based framework. TCC16 affirmed the importance of all future work tasks called for in section IX of CMM 2019-06 and supported prioritization of the risk-based assessment framework, the development of audit points, the development of a process for TCC to consider the aggregate tables alongside the draft CMR (CMM 2019-06 paragraph 33 and 34) and development of guidance on the participation of observers in the CMS Process. These ongoing efforts are expected to be progressed by CCMs in parallel under the CMS-IWG.

e. Intersessional Working Group to review CMM 2009-06 (Transshipment CMM)

43. The IWG to review CMM 2009-06 (Transshipment CMM) was established in 2018 (link to the [IWG page](#)). The focus of the IWG has been the development of a draft Scope of Work for the analysis of transshipment information. TCC16 also received an intersessional activity report from the Chair Alex Kahl (USA). The IWG has reconvened via email following TCC16 with a focus on concluding the Scope of Work for the analysis of transshipment information. The Chair has indicated his intention to continue with the work of the IWG for WCPFC17, with special consideration given to any COVID-19 impacts on the Commission's regulatory and monitoring regime for transshipment activities in the Convention Area.

f. VMS Small Working Group

44. The VMS-SWG to address the VMS data gap and improve the number of vessels reporting to the Commission VMS was established in 2019 ([link to VMS SWG page](#)). TCC16 received a progress report from the VMS-SWG Co-Chairs Viv Fernandes (Australia) and Terry Boone (USA) and recommended to WCPFC17 that the SWG continue its work in 2021. Discussions related to the WCPFC approved MTU list would continue post-TCC16, amongst interested CCMs, the Secretariat and other technical experts under the VMS-SWG up until the WCPFC17.

g. TCC Observer-related Working Group

45. The TCC Observer-related WG was established in 2017 to address two issues: (1) the need for CCMs to obtain copies of observer reports for their vessels in a timely manner so that they may fulfill their responsibility to undertake investigations of possible violations by their fishing vessels and nationals; and (2) observer conduct. The WG's work on the second issue, observer conduct, was completed in 2018, and the WG has continued to work on the first issue, the flow of observer reports. TCC16 received a [report](#) (TCC16-2020-17) from the TCC

WG on flow of Observer Reports from Chair Tom Graham (USA) and supported some recommended amendments to the ROP Minimum Standards and for the Secretariat to provide a report on the feasibility and costs of an additional messaging enhancement being added to the online Compliance Case File System to be reported to TCC17.

2.8 *Future Work of the Commission and Subsidiary Bodies*

46. The Commission at WCPFC16 in December 2019 set itself an ambitious agenda for WCPFC17 and agreed on a 7-day annual meeting in December 2020 to consider amongst other routine matters the negotiation of a new tropical tuna measure to replace the current measure which will expire after 10 February 2021, the setting of hard limits and their allocation for the high seas purse seine fishery and the longline bigeye fishery and the progression of the implementation of the Indicative Work Plan to develop harvest strategies under CMM 2014-06. However, due to the constraints and limitations of online meetings, the Commission's agenda for WCPFC17 has been pared back substantially to focus on key essential decisions to ensure the continuation of the work and functions of the Commission in 2021 and onward years and to avoid any substantial gaps in the WCPFC conservation and management regime. Without preempting the outcomes of the WCPFC17, these issues will continue to feature predominantly in the work of the Commission in 2021 and into the future:

- a. a new measure for the tropical tuna to replace the current measure;
- b. progressing the implementation of the indicative work plan for the adoption of harvest strategies under CMM 2014-06;
- c. reforms to further enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the compliance monitoring scheme;
- d. continuation of stock assessments and an external experts peer review of stock assessment modeling;
- e. hard limits and allocations for the high seas purse seine fishery and longline bigeye fishery; and
- f. continuation of the work of the various intersessional working groups, in particular around the review of the Transshipment CMM, improving the number of vessels reporting to the Commission VMS through the VMS SWG and on progressing e-monitoring at the regional level through the ERandEMWG.

3. WORK OF THE SECRETARIAT

3.1 *Annual overview*

47. The work of the Secretariat in 2020 was severely challenged by the disruptions to international travels caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic. As a consequence, all Commission meetings were convened electronically using the Zoom online meeting platform. The constraints and limitations of an online meeting platform compelled the Secretariat to adjust and adapt its approaches to servicing the meetings. The challenge for the Secretariat was further compounded by the fact that three professional staff were caught up in the travel disruptions and at the time of writing remain unable to return to Pohnpei. They had to work remotely from their home bases. At the date of this report we have the new Assistant Compliance Manager functioning remotely from New Zealand, the ROP Coordinator and the IT Manager functioning remotely from Australia. There was also a turnover of staff in the Compliance programme with the former Assistant Compliance Manager Ms 'Ana Taholo (Tonga) left in May 2020 after seven years with the Secretariat and replaced by Ms Eidre Sharp (New Zealand) in June 2020.

48. Despite the challenges noted above, the Secretariat has a reasonably successful year. Some of the Secretariat’s key successes include:

- a. successfully serviced and supported the electronic meetings of the HOD, SC16, TCC16, NC16 and the ERandEMWG4;
- b. delivered on time the draft compliance monitoring report;
- c. supported the online consideration of the draft monitoring report resulting in TCC16 adopting a provisional compliance monitoring report for consideration at WCPFC17;
- d. continuation of the streamlining of annual reporting, including the trials of Annual Catch and Effort (ACE tables), which were positively received by SC16 and TCC16 and supported their extension;
- e. completing a review of the WCPFC online Compliance Case File system, which confirmed a widespread desire among CCMs to have the system enhanced to better meet their needs and TCC tasked the Secretariat to prioritise in its 2021 workplan, the implementation of a number of improvements to the online Compliance Case File system;
- f. implementation of an online ROP audit procedure that resulted in the completion of four audits in 2020, and at the time of writing a further two are underway;
- g. completing the independent audit report for financial accounts of 2019 despite the inability of the principal Auditor to visit the Secretariat offices; and
- h. delivery in 2020 of online applications for CCMs including the new VMS reporting tool, the high seas transshipment reporting tool and automated publishing of ACE tables.

3.2 *Implementation of the Secretariat Corporate Plan*

49. The tables below detail the activities and outputs of the Secretariat over the past year, against the Goals and Objectives of the WCPFC Secretariat Corporate Plan 2020-2023, as accepted at WCPFC16 as an internal planning document to guide the work of the Secretariat (see [WCPFC-2019-32](#) and <https://www.wcpfc.int/wcpfc-secretariat-corporate-plan>).

Goal 1: To provide efficient and effective administrative support to the WCPFC	
Objective 1.1 Provide secretariat services to the WCPFC and its meetings using internationally recognised standards and best practices	
Activities	Annual Outputs
1.1.1 Develop a budget for the Commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual budget for 2021 distributed on 21 October and to be discussed at FAC14 and WCPFC17 (WCPFC17-2020-FAC14-09). • Funds and assets managed as per expenditure statement for 2019 was circulated to CCMs on 14 September (Circular 2020/101). • Online meetings were successfully convened for HOD, SC16, TCC16, NC16, ERandEMWG4.
1.1.2 Facilitate and support the implementation of Commission decisions and tasks for the Secretariat.	
1.1.3 Organise all the meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.	
1.1.4 Efficiently and effectively manage the funds and assets of the Commission.	
1.1.5 Prepare annual reports on the activities of the Commission and the Secretariat.	
1.1.6 Facilitate external audits of the financial records of the Commission.	

<p>1.1.7 Manage official communications and circulars from and to CCMs and stakeholders.</p> <p>1.1.8 Maintain lists of official contacts for CCMs and stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online WCPFC17 planned for 8 - 15 December. • Official communications and circulars properly maintained and accessible on www.wcpfc.int. • Official contact list regularly updated and utilised. • The 2020 Annual Report of the Executive Director on WCPFC MCS and compliance tools tabled at TCC16 (TCC16-2020-05). • This 2020 Annual Report of the Executive Director to be tabled at WCPFC17. • Auditor’s Report for 2019 and General Account Fund Financial Statements circulated on 14 September (Circular 2020/101) and discussed at FAC14 and WCPFC17.
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Summary of annual activities under Objective 1.1

Despite the COVID-19 disruptions, the Secretariat was able to deliver the necessary secretariat services in support of the work and meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies in 2020. Online meetings were successfully convened and supported by the Secretariat for the special HOD, SC16, TCC16, NC16, and the ERandEMWG4. As may be assessed from the outcomes of those meetings described under section 2 of this report the meetings were able to deliver the desired outcomes and lay the preparatory work to support the Commission deliberations at WCPFC17 in December 2020.

The 2019 financial statements and accounts were completed, audited and circulated to Members, together with the External Auditor’s Report on the 14 September 2020. The completion of the report was slightly delayed due to the inability of the principal Auditor to visit the Secretariat office. Arrangements were made to allow local counterparts of the principal Auditor to undertake the onsite inspections. The Auditor reported that the statements and accounts compiled for 2019 were compliant with the required accounting standards as well as the Commission’s Financial Regulations and presented a fair view of the financial position of the Commission. The Auditor’s report will be presented for the collective review of FAC14 and the Commission at WCPFC17 in December 2020.

The Secretariat was able to provide the requisite annual reports to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies including this annual report and the Executive Director 2020 Report on the performance and status of the various MCS and compliance tools including the Record of Fishing Vessels, High Seas Boarding and Inspection, the Vessels Monitoring System, Regional Observer Programme, Transshipment and the Data Access Rules and Procedure to name but a few of those tools.

The official circulars between the Secretariat and CCMs have proliferated in 2020 as a result of the pandemic conditions. As of 27 October, the number of circulars has reached 126, unusually high compare to previous years.

Objective 1.2

Ensure an effective, open, harmonious and inclusive Secretariat

Activities

- 1.2.1 Prepare and implement Secretariat work plans in support of Commission activities.
- 1.2.2 Implement performance monitoring and evaluation of Secretariat staff and activities.
- 1.2.3 Implement the Human Resources Management and Development Strategy to ensure the attraction and retention of high-performing employees.
- 1.2.4 Address health and safety issues.
- 1.2.5 Ensure continued staff development and training, in particular, locally recruited staff.

Annual Outputs

- The Secretariat Corporate Plan accepted at WCPFC16 (WCPFC16-2019-08) was operative for its first year in 2020.
- This 2020 Annual Report of the Executive Director is reporting on the performance of the Corporate Plan in 2020.
- A 4 phase COVID-19 Response Strategy for the Secretariat was approved by the Executive Director.
- One professional position and three support staff positions were filled in 2020.
- 3 support staff members were approved for continuing staff development out of the staff training budget.
- A Policy for the Award of Performance Bonuses to Support Staff was approved by the Executive Director for implementation from 2020 and onward.
- Annual staff performance appraisals were undertaken on the anniversary of staff contracts.

Summary of annual activities under Objective 1.2

The Secretariat Corporate Plan accepted by WCPFC16 in December 2019 as an internal planning document to guide the work of the Secretariat was implemented for the first time this year. And this Annual Report is reporting on its performance and as an organic planning document the expectation is that the Corporate Plan will be continuously refreshed and updated so that it continues to remain relevant.

Although Pohnpei remains pandemic free, the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic at the start of 2020 caused enormous stress and panic to staff and their families. As a response, the Secretariat adopted a four phases COVID-19 response strategy. The first phase is to institute strict hygienic conducts in the office and required all staff and visitor to wash their hands using alcoholic sanitizers before entering the office building and to observe proper hand washing protocols as recommended by public health authorities. Staff and families were also encouraged to avoid large gatherings. The second phase is when the main entry ports to Pohnpei, Guam and Honolulu are reported to have confirmed COVID-19 cases. In this phase, the Secretariat will commence trials requiring staff to work remotely from their home and to make sure staff are properly equipped with good internet connection at home to allow them access to the Commission internet network. At this second phase, expatriate staff were given the choice to return to their home country

and work remotely from offshore. The third phase caters for situations where Pohnpei starts to open up its borders to stranded citizens and residents. In this phase, the Secretariat will reactivate its trials for staff to work remotely from their home and limit access to large gatherings. The fourth and final phase is when Pohnpei has a confirmed COVID-19 case in which case the Secretariat offices will close down completely. At the date of this report, the Secretariat and staff are in still in the second phase as both Guam and Honolulu for sometimes now have had numerous confirmed COVID-19 cases and casualties. As a consequence, the Secretariat was able to trial for several weeks staff teleworking from home and assistance was provided to support staff to enhance their internet connectivity at their homes. One expatriate staff took up the offer to return home and has been teleworking from offshore since April this year. Another staff whilst on duty travel was caught up in the travel disruptions and was unable to return to Pohnpei and had to return home and work from there. A new recruit in June was unable to travel to Pohnpei and had to commence work from her home station.

The Secretariat annual staff performance appraisal programme continues in 2020 and those staff that were assessed to have performed satisfactorily and have not reached the limit of their salary scales were awarded annual increments. For staff that have reached the limit of their salary scales they are not entitled to any further salary increment. In the case of support staff, the Staff Regulations provides for the payment of a performance bonus if their performances are assessed to be highly satisfactory. This performance bonus was never administered previously due to lack of guidance as to how the bonus should to be administered. After several consultations with support staff, the Executive Director approved a policy that provide a process for the award of performance bonuses to support staff under rule 20(g) of the Staff Regulations to be enforced starting in 2020.

The Commission budget for 2020 includes a staff training provision and three support staff were approved in 2020 to pursue staff development courses with their course fees met from this budgetary provision.

Due to the travel disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, expatriate staff were not able to take annual home leave as they are entitled to, so the Executive Director has permitted those staff to carry over their unused home leave for future leave travel.

Goal 2: To manage the provision of technical, scientific, and compliance information and advice to the WCPFC

Objective 2.1
Efficiently administer the WCPFC’s MCS and Compliance programme and activities

Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>2.1.1 Serve as the Secretariat to the TCC and its Working Groups, including providing support to the annual compliance monitoring scheme processes and discussion of MCS and Compliance related matters.</p> <p>2.1.2 Administer the technical operation of the Commission’s agreed arrangements for monitoring, control and surveillance which include <i>inter</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The online TCC16 was successfully convened and supported with its Outcomes Document issued on time and the Summary Report to be finalised before WCPFC17. ○ Required annual reports on the Commission’s MCS tools were tabled at TCC16 with an overview report provided through the Executive Directors Overview Report of the

<p><i>alia</i> the Commission’s Record of Fishing Vessels, Vessel Monitoring System, Regional Observer Programme, IUU Vessel List, High Seas Boarding and Inspection Scheme, Monitoring of high seas transshipment activities and administration of data access rules and procedures.</p> <p>2.1.3 Prepare a draft Compliance Monitoring Report concerning each CCM and collective obligations for review by the TCC, that incorporates information submitted by CCMs and records the final compliance assessments adopted by the Commission each year.</p> <p>2.1.4 Prepare and maintain online annual reporting and compliance monitoring reporting systems for use by Members to fulfil Commission reporting requirements.</p> <p>2.1.5 Maintain the WCPFC online compliance case file system as a secure, searchable system to store, manage and make available information to assist relevant CCMs with tracking alleged violations by vessels, and as decided by the Commission.</p> <p>2.1.6 Compile, analyse and disseminate MCS related data and information on Member’s compliance and fisheries management programs, and convey that advice to CCMs.</p> <p>2.1.7 Research new and emerging technologies and procedures that will enhance the Commission’s MCS efforts and Members annual reporting to the Commission.</p> <p>2.1.8 Implement other approved TCC-related activities including provision of technical advice.</p>	<p>WCPFC MCS and Compliance Programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The draft 2020 CMR was issued on time on 30 July and was considered at TCC16. TCC16 has recommended a Provisional CMR to WCPFC17. ○ Report on Secretariat support services to the CMS was tabled at TCC16 (TCC16-2020-08A - Overview of Compliance Monitoring Scheme Matters for TCC16). ○ Various reference and analytical documents to facilitate the priority work of the TCC16 including the Compliance Monitoring Scheme including: ○ TCC16 received progress report on work of six related technical IWGs which were supported by the Secretariat in 2020. ○ In 2020, an online ROP audit procedure has been developed and four audits have been completed, with a further two underway.
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Summary of annual activities under Objective 2.1

Despite, the COVID-19 disruptions, the Secretariat was able to support the work and activities of the WCPFC’s MCS and Compliance programme in 2020.

An overview report of the activities of the WCPFC Technical and Compliance programme was tabled at TCC14 in the Executive Director’s Overview Report of the WCPFC MCS and Compliance Programmes (TCC16 working paper [TCC16-2020-05](#)) which was favourably

received. The Executive Director's report was supplemented by separate individual reports on each of the MCS tools including:

- 06 - [Draft IUU Vessel List and current WCPFC IUU Vessel List](#)
- 07 - [CNM requests in 2020](#)
- RP01 - [Commission VMS](#)
- 15 - [Recommendations related to the WCPFC Approved ALC/MTU List](#)
- RP02 - [Regional Observer Programme](#)
- RP03 - [Transshipment Reporting](#)
- RP04 - [High Seas Boarding and Inspection \(HSBI\) Scheme](#)
- RP05 - [Record of Fishing Vessels](#)
- RP06 - [Eastern High Seas Pocket \(EHSP\) Special Management Area](#)
- 07 - [Port Inspections and Implementation of Minimum Standards for Port State Measures](#)
- RP08 - [Administration of the WCPFC Data Access Rules and Procedures](#)
- RP09 - [2019/20 Review of Integrity of Secretariat VMS data and Review of Integrity of IMS and RFV](#)
- RP10 - [Performance of the E-reporting Standards](#)

The Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS) was acknowledged to continue to be at the core of the Commission's Technical and Compliance programme. It provides the necessary platform for the TCC to undertake its key task of assessing the level of compliance of CCMs of their obligations under the WCPF Convention and CMMs. It is a platform that rests on top of a network of MCS tools and other data collection programmes that furnish the relevant data and information to inform TCC's assessment. In 2020 the Secretariat, despite the COVID-19 induced travel disruptions and the turnover in the Assistant Compliance Manager position, was able to deliver on time the compliance monitoring reports (CMR) on 30 July for 37 CCMs and one collective group of members. The full draft CMR, which incorporated replies from twenty (20) CCMs, and highlights 69 potential issues, was made available to CCMs on 8 September. The draft CMRs also reviewed a significant amount of information from multiple legitimate sources that can usefully inform the TCC's review of the technical and compliance matters under existing CMMs during the 2019 calendar year. The draft full 2020 CMR was considered by TCC16 and TCC16 was able to recommend a Provisional CMR to WCPFC17.

The Secretariat also tabled at TCC16 several reference and analytical documents to facilitate the priority work of the TCC16 including the Compliance Monitoring Scheme. They include:

- 08B - [List of Capacity Assistance Requests and Capacity Development Plans](#)
- 09 - [Revised Chair's Proposal for Developing a Provisional Compliance Monitoring Report at TCC16](#)
- 10 - [Update on Streamlining of Annual Reporting Initiatives](#)
- 12 - [Review of the WCPFC online Compliance Case File System](#)
- 14 - [COVID-19 related intersessional decisions](#)
- 20 - [Preliminary consideration of anticipated forecast of Secretariat work commitments for TCC in 2021/22](#)

The busiest months of the year for the Secretariat MCS/Compliance staff are between June and October, where the deadlines for annual reporting, the due date for the draft CMRs and preparations for TCC16 occur. Usually, these are also the months where IWG/WG activities are gaining some momentum, so the Secretariat's strategy to managing the work to produce, on schedule, the draft CMR, has continued to include careful work planning including

commencement of the preparation of online annual reporting systems and pre-population of CMR analyses including CMR supporting files in March.

The Secretariat acknowledged the contribution of SPC-OFP colleagues as a source of information for the draft CMRs. SPC-OFP continues to provide advice on the completeness of scientific data provision by CCMs, ROP data submission and available information on purse-seine and longline observer coverage, bycatch fishery interaction estimates summarized in the ROP Annual Report and catch and effort table summaries for tropical tuna CMMs (CMM 2018-01) and south Pacific albacore (CMM 2015-02). Since 2016, SPC-OFP colleagues have also continued to provide considerable assistance to the Secretariat so that ROP-data can continue to be used as a source in the online Compliance Case File system.

During 2020 the Secretariat and SPC-OFP contributed to the continuing work on streamlining annual reporting, a task that was originally included in the list of CMS Future Work tasks. In 2020 a Review of the Compliance Case File System was completed and the Secretariat has identified additional budget is required in 2021 so that the Secretariat can improve the online Compliance Case File system usefulness and ease of use based on CCM feedback and considerations of technical feasibility. The Secretariat remained ready to support progress on the CMS Future Work tasks towards enhancing the operation of the CMS in 2020/21. As the CMM is only operational until the end of 2021, these future tasks remain essential to the Commission's efforts to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the CMS.

COVID-19 has significantly affected routine monitoring of fishing activities as discussed at the recent TCC16 meeting. While most ROP observers have now been repatriated, some observer providers are working to get the last observer's home from overseas or off vessels. The ongoing border restrictions of most countries means repatriation remains a slow process. While WCPFC COVID-19 decisions have suspended the need for an observer to monitor transshipments, the slower than desired progress in repatriating observers has meant that, until recently, few transshipments have been unobserved. However, this will change because the WCPFC Decisions in the context of COVID-19 were extended to 15 February 2021 and because few observers remain at sea. On-going border restrictions has also reduced the opportunities for in-port vessel inspections, and there are fewer High Seas Boarding and Inspections. The priority for the health of observers, fisheries personnel and crew combined with uncertainty over the timeframe that COVID-19 related decisions will be needed, means CCMs are considering ways to improve their ability to monitor fishing activities while preventing the transmission of the virus. This will undoubtedly be an ongoing discussion for the Commission.

The MCS Programme of the WCPFC remains an integrated programme that need to be viewed in its totality taking account of the required priorities, timeframes and available financial and staff resources. Drawing on the past five years' experience, it is clear to the Secretariat that there have been incremental increases over time in the level of support required for the TCC work programme. However, the staffing structure for the Secretariat in the MCS/Compliance area has not changed since the establishment of the Assistant Compliance Manager position in 2012. The MCS/Compliance work of the Secretariat has successfully been supplemented over a number of years through consultancy, secondment and in-kind assistance which has allowed it to maintain the level of support required to deliver on priority activities.

The Secretariat also supported the work of 6 related technical working groups who provided progress reports to TCC16 and are expected to do the same to WCPFC17. They include:

- VMS SWG to address the VMS Gap and improve the number of vessels reporting to the Commission VMS ([IWG page](#));
- TCC working group on flow of observer reports and observer conduct ([TCC16-2020-17](#));
- ER and EM WG4 [Meeting](#);
- IWG to review CMM 2009-06 ([IWG page](#));
- IWG on CMS Future Work; and
- Joint IATTC/NC Technical Working Group on Pacific bluefin CDS.

The reports of the above working groups to WCPFC17 are expected to forecast additional work commitments for the Secretariat and CCMs in support of the Commission’s Technical and Compliance programme. The Secretariat is anticipating a potentially significant incremental increase in resource commitment for the Secretariat to support over the next one to two years, that requires careful consideration and planning. Depending on the outcomes from WCPFC17, avenues such as additional consultancy, secondment and in-kind assistance might be necessary for the Secretariat to be able to successfully deliver on priority tasked activities alongside the Compliance/MCS routine work tasks. Generally, the period February to June is a time where any additional project activities would preferably be scheduled.

Objective 2.2

Efficiently administer the WCPFC’s Science programme and activities

Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>2.2.1 Serve as the Secretariat to the Scientific Committee and its Working Groups.</p> <p>2.2.2 Facilitate and assist the Scientific Committee in the provision and discussion of its report to the Commission on the best available scientific information and advice on the conservation and management of the stocks.</p> <p>2.2.3 Assist with the development and submission to the Commission of workplan and budget for the Science Programme.</p> <p>2.2.4 Administer and monitor the approved science programmes and activities.</p> <p>2.2.5 Facilitate the provision of support to the implementation of the Harvest Strategy Work Plan.</p> <p>2.2.6 Manage relations with the Scientific Services Provider and other scientific experts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SC16 meeting was successfully convened electronically (12 - 19 August) with its Outcomes Document posted and Summary Report distributed for review: (https://www.wcpfc.int/meetings/16th-regular-session-scientific-committee. SC16 Report will be tabled and discussed at WCPFC17. ▪ Scientific Services Agreement with SPC for 2020 was finalised and implemented successfully. ▪ Secretariat reported to SC16 on the status of 2020 science projects and activities, and established an online discussion forum for CCMs to review the 2020 SC projects which were omitted from the SC16 abbreviated agenda: https://forum.wcpfc.int/c/SC-16/8. ▪ SC16 adopted the 2021-2023 SC Work Programme and Budget, which will be presented to WCPFC17 for incorporation into the Commission budget for 2021. ▪ A dedicated webpage for the Harvest Strategy Work Plan https://www.wcpfc.int/harvest-

	<p>strategy is regularly updated. The SPC-OFP takes the lead role in progressing the implementation of the work plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secretariat continued to maintain a close and satisfactory working relationship with scientific services providers including SPC-OFP, ISC and other science agencies through regular interactions.
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Summary of annual activities under Objective 2.2

As reported under section 2 of this report, the SC16 meeting, held in August 2020, was a success and delivered the desired outcomes mindful of the constraints of the virtual meeting platform and limited and focused meeting agenda. The Secretariat managed the planning and preparation for the meeting including coordinating the development of the agenda and the preparations of meeting documentation in collaboration with the Scientific Services Provider (SPC-OFP), the Chair, Vice Chair and the Theme Conveners. During the meeting the Secretariat facilitated the participation of delegates by ensuring that they were familiar and comfortable with the meeting functionalities of the Zoom online platform. After the meeting, the Secretariat had the Outcomes Document for SC16 posted within the requisite timeline and its Summary Report distributed to meeting participants for review and finalisation. The SC16 outcomes will be tabled and discussed at WCPFC17.

The WCPFC Science Programme is carried substantially by the designated Scientific Services Provider of the Commission (SPC-OFP). So, it is imperative that SPC-OFP is adequately resourced to undertake the tasks required of it in 2020. To that end, the Secretariat was able to finalize early in the year the Scientific Services Agreement with SPC-OFP for 2020 that defines the work expected of SPC-OFP in 2020.

To support the work of the SC, there are ongoing and new science projects and activities implemented principally by SPC-OFP and other science services provider like CSIRO and ISC. The Secretariat plays a coordination and monitoring role over these projects for the purpose of updating the SC. For the SC16, the Secretariat presented the status of those projects and established an online discussion forum for CCMs to review those projects and activities (<https://forum.wcpfc.int/c/SC-16/8>). The Secretariat also coordinated the development and passage of prioritisation of new projects for inclusion into the 2021-2023 SC Work Programme and Budget, which was adopted by SC16 and will be forwarded to WCPFC17.

The Science Programme supports the implementation of the indicative work plan for the development of harvest strategies. The SPC-OFP takes the lead in this work with funding support from the government of New Zealand and partially from the Commission. For 2020, progress on the implementation of the harvest strategy work plan was affected by the pandemic induced disruptions to international travels and the inability of CCMs to discuss and negotiate harvest strategy issues through an online meeting platform. The Secretariat continues to maintain and update a dedicated webpage on its website that tracks progress in

the implementation of the work plan on harvest strategy <https://www.wcpfc.int/harvest-strategy>.

Goal 3: To manage the collection and dissemination of data and information relevant to the work of the WCPFC

Objective 3.1

Collect and disseminate relevant data and information to facilitate the work of the WCPFC and its Members in accordance with applicable rules

Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>3.1.2 Collect data and maintain databases for resource assessments and other information needs to support the work of the Commission.</p> <p>3.1.3 Develop and manage IT tools and solutions to enhance access to data and information.</p> <p>3.1.4 Facilitate consideration by the Commission of emerging and more efficient and cost-effective technologies in data collection and analysis that meet the Commission needs.</p> <p>3.1.5 Administer the collection of quality data from contractors and Members as may be required.</p> <p>3.1.6 Administer the collection of compliance, stock assessment and other data from, and dissemination of such data upon request to, national programmes, scientists, compliance managers, other collaborating agencies and industry bodies.</p> <p>3.1.7 Administer the Commission's Rules and Procedures for the Protection, Access to, and Dissemination of Data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reports on WCPFC data holdings and data management were provided to SC16 and TCC16. ▪ Summaries of requisite annual reporting under CMMs and compilation of data relevant to CMMs were provided to TCC16 through various meeting papers. ▪ Secretariat continued to support the work of the ERandEM Working Group to develop e-reporting and e-monitoring standards. ▪ Report on the Administration of the WCPFC Data Access Rules and Procedures was provided to TCC16.

Summary of annual activities under Objective 3.1

The Secretariat in 2020 was able to confirm the delivery of several online technical solutions for use by CCMs in these areas:

- As part of the VMS reporting status tool, the "CCM Vessels" VMS Reporting Status report provides relevant flag CCMs an automated solution in response to the WCPFC14 task, as a "CCM Vessels" VMS Reporting Status report. The "CCM Vessels" VMS Reporting Status report is delivered to relevant flag CCMs through their CCM portal. The Status report provides CCMs with a daily snap-shot of whether each of their vessels on the Record of Fishing Vessels is expected to be meeting its Commission VMS requirements through the FFA VMS (based on FFA Good Standing List) or if not, whether WCPFC has completed the necessary steps to

activate the vessels MTU to report to the Commission VMS, and if so provide a generic vessel status for each of their vessels and a daily VMS-reporting status (how many position reports are transmitted by each vessel each day for the past 14 days). Authorised CCM users are also able to access "CCM Vessels" VMS Reporting Status report for their flagged vessels on the secure section of the WCPFC website: <https://www.wcpfc.int/ccm-vessel-monitoring-system>. CCMs are also able to download a copy of the relevant report in CSV format.

- Online access to Authorised Flag CCM users to their high seas transshipment notifications and high seas transshipment declarations as received by WCPFC, including those reports that have been submitted using the WCPFC High Seas Transshipment E-Reporting System APP - this is available to authorized flag CCM users at link <https://www.wcpfc.int/ccm-transshipment>. Authorised flag CCM users only have access to the submissions made by or on behalf of their vessels, and not those submitted by another CCM.
- The trial publishing of WCPFC Annual Catch and Effort Estimate (ACE) Tables ACE Tables on the WCPFC website at <https://www.wcpfc.int/ace-by-fleet>. The trial was approved for 2020, so as to allow CCMs through SC and TCC, to explore a streamlining suggestion for Annual Report Part 1.

In 2019/20 the uptake of electronic reporting tools in WCPFC is continuing and some key developments were outlined in [TCC16-2020-RP10](#). To date the Commission has adopted three sets of E-reporting standards:

- In December 2016 *E-reporting standards for operational catch and effort data* (WCPFC13 Summary Report paragraph 584 and Attachment T);
- In December 2017 *E-reporting standards for observer data* (WCPFC14 Summary Report paragraph 401 and Attachment T); and
- In December 2018 *Standards for E-reporting of high seas transshipment declarations and transshipment notices* (WCPFC15 Summary Report Attachment S).

Irrespective of the effective date, it should be noted that the various E-reporting standards are voluntary until such time the Commission decides to make them mandatory (refer E-reporting SSPs paragraph 3).

The TCC required annual report (RP08) on [Administration of the WCPFC Data Access Rules and Procedures](#) confirmed that in 2019/20 the Secretariat has maintained its system of controls over approvals for access to WCPFC data and information. In 2019/20, the Secretariat received and processed seventy-five (75) requests from Members and others for specific WCPFC data, some of which related to multiple types of WCPFC non-public domain data.

The requisite reports on WCPFC data holdings and data management were provided to SC16 and TCC16 through the following meeting papers:

- SC16-ST-WP-01 - [Scientific data available to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission](#);
- TCC16-2020-IP03 - [Status of Observer Data Management \(revision of SC16-ST-IP-02\)](#);
- SC16-ST-IP-03 - [An update on cannery data with potential use to the WCPFC](#);
- TCC Required annual report (RP08) on [Administration of the WCPFC Data Access; Rules and Procedures](#) provides a list of non-scientific data holdings of WCPFC.

The summary of annual reporting under various CMMs and compilation of data relevant to CMMs were provided to TCC16 through various meeting papers including:

- RP02 - [Regional Observer Programme](#)
- 11 - [Summary from Part 2 of CMM 2013-07 annual reports - RY2019](#)
- IP01 - [Summary of submissions of Annual Report Part 1 and Annual Report Part 2](#)
- IP04 - [Summary of the Reports received under Tropical Tuna CMMs from 2018 to 2020](#)
- IP05 - [Catch and effort tables on tropical tuna CMMs \(update of SC16-MI-19\)](#)
- IP06 - [Summary of Reporting Received by WCPFC under CMM 2010-05 and CMM 2015-02: South Pacific Albacore](#)
- IP07 - [Trends in the South Pacific albacore longline and troll fisheries \(rev1 of SC16-SA-IP-11\)](#)
- IP08 - [Updated information on North Pacific albacore effort data \(NC16-2020-WP01\)](#)
- IP09 - [Compiled information on Pacific bluefin tuna - fishing effort and catch \(NC16-2020-WP02\)](#)

Objective 3.2

Acquire and maintain reliable, cost-effective and secure IT systems and infrastructure to ensure the integrity of and access to WCPFC data and information

Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>3.2.1 Develop and manage the Commission’s information management systems, online compliance reporting tools and electronic reporting systems.</p> <p>3.2.2 Research new and emerging technologies and procedures to enhance the Commission’s capacity in the dissemination and conveyance of data and information.</p> <p>3.2.3 Plan for, design, develop and manage the ICT requirements of the Secretariat.</p> <p>3.2.4 Provide ICT support to Commission meetings.</p> <p>3.2.5 Implement the Commission’s Information Security Policy and cyber security program in accordance with internationally recognized standards and best practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat network maintained internal operations and support to Members at more than 99% systems availability. • Reports on Secretariat use of IT tools in support of work of the Commission were tabled at TCC16. • All Commission meetings in 2020 were successfully hosted virtually using the Zoom online platform. • The Secretariat maintains a fibreoptic connection to FSM Telecommunication and a backup satellite connection with Kacific. • The availability of the IT/VMS Security Audit Report on the secure section of the Commissions website (Circular 2020/124).

Summary of annual activities under Objective 3.2

The online capabilities of the Secretariat and its internet network and bandwidth was severely challenged in 2020 when the Commission decided to convene all its meetings electronically. The ICT team had to trial the use of available video conferencing tools different platforms in low bandwidth situations and establishing a leading practice to hosting large-scale secure meetings. The choice of an online meeting platform was initially a contentious issue due to some CMMs having regulatory constraints and policies

against the use of certain online platforms. There were also considerations for some CCMs especially the small island developing CCMs with severe bandwidth and connectivity issues. At the end, the special Heads of Delegation meeting on 15 July settled the issue and decided on the use of the Zoom online platform. Accordingly, all the Commission meetings that were convened electronically used the said online platform. For those online meetings, the Secretariat used the public facing website which uncovered some shortfalls and proved the concept of using the main website infrastructure and associated benefits. The Secretariat was able to introduce an ‘online discussion forum’ to supplement the Zoom platform to facilitate prior discussions of selected issues in order to minimize time spent on those issues during the plenary. This feature was utilized at the SC16 and TCC16 with some success and is expected to be also available for the WCPFC17.

The various reports on the Secretariat use of IT tools in support of work of the Commission were tabled at TCC16, including:

- [Executive Directors Overview Report of the WCPFC MCS and Compliance Programmes](#) (05) provides an overview of online solutions for CCMs and future IMS priorities;
- TCC Required annual report (RP09) [2019/20 Review of Integrity of Secretariat VMS data and Review of Integrity of IMS and RFV](#) was prepared as per the VMS SSPs;
- TCC Required annual report (RP08) on [Administration of the WCPFC Data Access Rules and Procedures](#) confirms that in 2019/20 the Secretariat has maintained its system of controls over approvals for access to WCPFC data and information;
- TCC required annual report (RP10) on [Performance of the E-reporting Standards](#) provides a report on the uptake of E-reporting technologies for data collection; and
- [Overview of Compliance Monitoring Scheme Matters for TCC16](#) (08A) overviews the Secretariat support to the Compliance Monitoring Scheme, including the associated online annual reporting and online Compliance Case File systems.

The Secretariat has already started the process of upgrading the meetings section of the main website to provide a much-needed modernization of the meeting server user interface and provide a consistent experience for delegates whether they are participating in person or remotely. The proposal would cover redevelopment of the meetings website including secure document management and delegated registration processing, which would help the organization adapt to the challenges of virtual meetings.

Events of this year placed additional demands on the Secretariat ICT infrastructure with more staff working remotely away from the Secretariat Headquarters. The ICT team also worked closely with senior managers on the Secretariats COVID-19 response strategy, which included trials of all professional and support staff working remotely from their homes. The network firewalls, email gateway and remote desktop infrastructure were able to meet the additional demands required to support the level of teleworking working away from the Secretariat office. The Secretariat network maintained internal operations and support to CCMs at more than 99% systems availability.

The budgetary provisions of \$100,000 for the WCPFC Information Management System (IMS) developments and a modest \$18,000 for online publishing through the website have been annually used to develop and enhance the IMS hosted databases for CMM reporting at the Secretariat, to develop the WCPFC online reporting systems and more recently the

online WCPFC Compliance Case File System. The improvements to the IMS and the online Compliance Case File system were appreciated and fully utilized by CCMs to enable them to submit their annual reports on schedule. These efforts have also assisted the Secretariat with meeting the deadline for issuing the draft CMR. The Secretariat acknowledges the ongoing support from IMS contractor Taz-E and website contractor Eighty Options to assist the Secretariat with the development and ongoing support provided to the Commissions integrated MCS/Compliance Information Management System and associated online IT tools to date. Continued improvements to the Secretariat IMS remain essential to the servicing of the Commission's Technical and Compliance programme and the Secretariat will require additional budget in 2021 to improve the online Compliance Case File system usefulness and ease of use based on CCM feedback and considerations of technical feasibility.

The Secretariat maintains that there are five priority work areas for future IMS development over the period 2020 to 2021 and they include:

- a) implementing the approved decisions from the Commissions consideration of the suggested approaches to streamline the Commission's reporting requirements with the objective to make annual reporting more manageable and less burdensome;
- b) continuing to support ways to improve the collection of accurate and timely data, including through electronic reporting (ER) and electronic monitoring (EM);
- c) continuing to expand the analytical capability and business intelligence of the WCPFC IMS, including enhancing GIS/mapping tools for displaying and integrating various WCPFC data;
- d) improving the access and capability of the Secretariat to review ROP observer data, and ensure that the Secretariat's internal MCS operating procedures and IMS systems adequately cater for record-keeping, handling of evidence and notices to CCMs of possible violations; and
- e) review procedures and continue to develop and enhance IT tools, in particular through the website, so that the Secretariat is better equipped to provide timely access for Members to MCS-relevant information in support of member MCS activities and to share MCS data with authorized entities of CCMs, in accordance with the WCPFC data rules and procedure.

Generally, the period February to June is a time that where the Secretariat MCS/Compliance team, with support from the IT Section and IT Contractors, work to incrementally build and enhance the WCPFC Information Management System (IMS) hosted databases for centralizing records of CMM reporting; and the development of integrated MCS analytical tools at the Secretariat.

The work on electronic reporting and electronic monitoring holds huge potential for enhanced data collection, coverage and quality in the future. The Secretariat has efficiently utilized its limited budget in this area and with the financial assistance provided by New Zealand in 2018 and by the United States in 2019 positive progress on the implementation of the E-reporting high seas transshipment project continues to be reported ([TCC16-2020-RP10](#)), including the uptake by two Members of the WCPFC High Seas Transshipment E-reporting Application (TSER) since February 2020 and September 2019 respectively. More importantly, the project was designed to provide the Secretariat with a base infrastructure that could easily be modified to collect other types of data. With smart investment in this area, the Commission can expedite the development of the necessary framework to operationalize e-reporting and e-monitoring at the Commission level.

Goal 4: To support members, cooperating non-members and participating territories to fulfil their obligations to the WCPFC

Objective 4.1
Efficiently administer available WCPFC resources to support Members to fulfil their WCPFC obligations

Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>4.1.1 Coordinate Commission Members and other stakeholders participation in meetings of the Commission.</p> <p>4.1.2 Administer sustainable financing mechanism under article 30(3) of the WCPFC Convention.</p> <p>4.1.3 Administer Commission’s resources designated to build the technical capacity of members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All available CCMs were supported to attend online meetings of SC16, TCC16, NC16 and ERandEM4. Similar support in place for participation at the online meeting of FAC14 and WCPFC17. ▪ A report on status of voluntary contributions and trust funds will be presented to FAC14 for onward transmission to WCPFC17. ▪ WCPFC website Article 30 page was maintained as a page dedicated to the implementation of Article 30 of the Convention, including to provide CCMs with an easy reference to funding options and application processes. ▪ The Secretariat continued to support the JTF and the CTTF. ▪ The WPEA-ITM project made steady but disrupted progress in 2020.

Summary of annual activities under Objective 4.1

With COVID-19 imposed travel restrictions, all meetings of the Commission were convened electronically. As such, the Secretariat was relieved from the administrative burden of organising travel arrangements for delegates that the Commission is financially responsible for their attendance. Instead, the Secretariat was responsible for ensuring that all CCMs and observer delegations enrolled to participate at Commission meetings were able to participate at the online meetings. The Secretariat IT team were able to assist CCMs with technical issues, so CCMs can fully utilize all the functionalities of the Zoom online platform. As noted above, the meetings were able to proceed with the requisite quorum and generally delivered the desired outcomes.

At the core of the funding mechanisms under article 30(3) of the WCPF Convention is the Special Requirement Fund (SRF) which support additional representatives to Commission meetings for developing CCMs in particular small island developing states. Because of the disruptions to international travels caused by the global pandemic, there was minimal activities funded by the SRF. The Secretariat, as required, will also present a report to FAC14 on the status of the various voluntary contributions and trust funds for review and onward transmission to WCPFC17 in December. These contributions and trust funds like the Japan Trust Fund (JTF) and the Chinese Taipei Trust Fund (CTTF) were designed to

fund dedicated technical activities from small island developing states to build their capacity in the fishery sector.

The Secretariat continued in 2020 to support the implementation the JTF and the CTF. The JTF is administered by the Secretariat in coordination with the Japan Fisheries Agency and the available funding for 2020 is USD \$232,821. There were 5 newly approved projects for 2020 from Kiribati, Palau and Tonga in the areas of data collection, observer programme and harvest strategy issues. For the CTF, it provided USD \$400,000 in funding in 2020 for projects from five members and the PNA office aimed at strengthening capacity building in monitoring, control and surveillance capabilities.

The Secretariat also engaged a dedicated Project Manager to manage the New Zealand funded Western Pacific East Asia Improved Tuna Monitoring Project (WPEA-ITM). The project has a budget of USD\$3.51 million for over 5 years. The Project Manager works closely with the national fisheries authorities in Indonesia, Philippines and Viet Nam in close collaboration with the SPC-OFP. The project activities earmarked for implementation 2020 were impacted by the travel disruptions, with a number of planned activities having to be postponed. However, a range of activities were able to proceed either remotely or with remote support from SPC, including data audits, annual catch estimates workshops in Indonesia and Philippines, and data collection training and observer training in Viet Nam. A number of important national activities were also able to proceed as planned, including data collection and entry, database improvements, and logsheet revisions and IT equipment upgrades in Viet Nam. The project Steering Committee is scheduled to meet electronically on 17 November 2020 to review and adopt the work programme and budget for 2021, with a focus on adapting the workplan to account for continued travel disruptions. For further information, please refer to SC16-RP-WPEA-1 (<https://www.wcpfc.int/node/46483>).

Objective 4.2

Provide and facilitate the provision of technical support and assistance to Members to assist them to fulfil their WCPFC obligations

Activities	Annual Outputs
<p>4.2.1 Provide technical assistance to members on MCS and annual reporting requirements as requested.</p> <p>4.2.2 Support efforts, including training, to build national technical capacity to enable members to fulfil their obligations to the Commission.</p> <p>4.2.3 Maintain the Strategic Investment Plan and Article 30 webpage on the Commission website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>List of Capacity Assistance Requests and Capacity Development Plans</u> summarizes Capacity Assistance needs identified by CCMs, based on this year’s Annual Report Part 2 and the draft CMRs - TCC16-2020-08B - ▪ <u>Executive Directors Overview Report of the WCPFC MCS and Compliance Programmes</u> provides an overview Secretariat assistance to CCMs in the Compliance/MCS area - TCC16-2020-05. ▪ An updated Strategic Investment Plan for the Special Requirement Fund will be presented to WCPFC17.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WCPFC website calendar was maintained to provide CCMs with an easy reference to WCPFC meetings, reporting deadline reminders and other key dates.
<p>Summary of annual activities under Objective 4.2</p> <p>The Secretariat continued to assist CCMs with the compilation of their Annual Report Part 1 and 2 Reports in the usual FFA/SPC regional workshops, like the FFA MCS Working Group meeting and the SPC Tuna Data Workshop, which in 2020 were hosted online. In addition, throughout the year the Secretariat was able to work with and assist many CCMs electronically with their Annual Reports Part 2, draft CMR reporting and WCPFC online Compliance Case File system-related work. This will continue into the next year as CCMs continue to familiarize themselves with this system and the changes being made to improve its usefulness and ease of use based on CCM feedback.</p> <p>In late 2019 the Secretariat continued to support observer and de-briefer trainings, and assistance was given on request to help CCM programmes with observer training and VMS training. The Secretariat continued to provide advice to national and sub-regional agencies in relation to Commission MCS programme matters, RFV and charter notification updates, transshipment reporting queries, Commission minimum standards and related issues. In 2020, much of the assistance has shifted to being completed where practicable online.</p> <p>As required the Secretariat would present to WCPFC17 in December an updated Strategic Investment Plan that would reflect the development assistance needs of developing CCMs as identified through the compliance monitoring scheme processes in 2020.</p>	

<p>Goal 5: To promote awareness and publicise the work of the WCPFC</p>	
<p>Objective 5.1 Effectively raise awareness of the WCPFC and its initiatives</p>	
<p>Activities</p>	<p>Annual Outputs</p>
<p>5.1.1 Implement a communication strategy to promote awareness of the work of the Commission.</p> <p>5.1.2 Represent the Commission at regional and international meetings and other forums.</p> <p>5.1.3 Maintain close collaborations with international and regional organisations and RFMOs in particular the tuna-RFMOs and those with management mandate within the Pacific Ocean.</p> <p>5.1.4 Maintain regular communications with members and stakeholders through official circulars and regular country visits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ED attended FAO ABNJ Tuna Project Steering Committee meeting. ▪ Attendance at the FFC online meetings. ▪ Compliance Manager chaired the TCN. ▪ Official circular proliferated in 2020 due to pandemic conditions. ▪ Supported communal activities – fishing tournament, tennis tournament, law society debate and the Pohnpei Swim Club. ▪ Provided facilities for workshops and meeting facilitated by the FSM Department of Justice, Micronesia

5.1.5 Entertain regular visits by members and stakeholders to the Commission head office.	Red Cross, SPC, FSM department of Education and NORMA.
5.1.6 Maintain a community outreach programme.	

Summary of annual activities under Objective 5.1

The Secretariat's attendance at regional and international meetings in 2020 was limited due to the global COVID-19 pandemic induced disruptions to international travels. In any event, the Executive Director was able to attend the ABNJ (Tuna) Project Steering Committee meeting in Rome in February to finalise the project submission for a second phase of the project which has been approved by the GEF Council in June. The project document is now being developed by a project design team under the oversight of FAO.

The Executive Director and senior managers participated in the online FFC officials and ministerial meetings in June and July.

In 2020, the Compliance Manager continued to be involved in the Tuna Compliance Network (TCN) in the capacity of Chair. TCN was launched in March 2017 and its aim is to facilitate communication and cooperation between officers responsible for compliance in the tuna RFMOs. While it is focused on tuna fisheries, the Network also promotes the involvement of other relevant experts in fisheries compliance and monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), in order to share best practice compliance processes, and ultimately to contribute to combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Some of the initiatives progressed in 2020 include:

- i. TCN facilitating collaboration between tuna and non-tuna RFMOs to support sharing of updates on their respective IUU vessel lists;
- ii. Discussion amongst officers responsible for compliance in Pacific RFMOs to further closer collaboration; and
- iii. Working towards initiating in late 2020 a FAO ABNJ Project Phase I desktop study that will provide a comparative analysis of Compliance Monitoring processes of the five tuna RFMOs.

The Compliance Manager, Assistant Compliance Manager, Legal Adviser, Acting TCC Chair Dr Robert Day and former TCC Chair Alexa Cole joined other experts from RFMO Secretariats, RFMO Compliance Committees, international organizations, academia, and civil society in a virtual workshop on best practices in compliance in RFMOs held 7 - 11 September 2020 convened by Pew Charitable Trusts and ISSF. The workshop provided a valuable opportunity to discuss compliance processes and procedures and to learn from each other's experiences and approaches.

The Secretariat continued to support communal activities in 2020 including sponsoring a fishing tournament, a tennis tournament, FSM National Law Day debate and the Pohnpei Swim Club.

Objective 5.2 Maintain a robust website and other electronic publications to disseminate widely the work of the WCPFC and Secretariat	
Activities	Annual Outputs
5.2.1 Maintenance of a modern and accessible website for the Commission containing relevant and updated information on the work of the Commission 5.2.2 Publication of the Secretariat's quarterly electronic newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ www.wcpfc.int regularly updated. ▪ Issued three editions of the e-newsletter in 2020.
Summary of annual activities under Objective 5.2	
<p>The Secretariat continue to maintain and regularly update its www.wcpfc.int website. This included the development in 2020 of a COVID-19 related page that contains copies of decisions adopted by the Commission in response to COVID-19 and other information that CCMs have asked to be shared about respective government measures to combat the spread of COVID-19 and that may be relevant to the WCPO fishery.</p> <p>The Secretariat continued to publish and distribute its electronic newsletters with three editions so far in 2020. The newsletter provides updates and news on the work of the Commission and the activities of the Secretariat. Its distribution list covers a broader spectrum including subscribers beyond officials and representatives of CCMs and observers of the WCPFC.</p>	

3.3 *Financial and Administrative Matters*

50. As earlier noted, the 2019 financial statements and accounts were completed, audited and circulated to Members on 14 September 2020 (Circular 2020/101), together with the External Auditor's Report. The Auditor reported that the statements and accounts compiled were compliant with the required accounting standards as well as the Commission's Financial Regulations and presented a fair view of the financial position of the Commission. The Auditor's report will be presented for the collective review and final consideration of WCPFC17 in December 2020.

51. The staff establishment at the Secretariat remains relatively stable at 24 staff comprising of 9 positions for professional staff including the Executive Director, and 15 positions for support staff. This year saw a turnover in one of the professional positions. In June the Secretariat staff bid farewell to Ms 'Ana Taholo, the Assistant Compliance Manager, who had been with the Secretariat for the last seven (7) years as the inaugural Assistant Compliance Manager. In late June, the Secretariat welcomed the new Assistant Compliance Manager, Ms Eidle Sharp from Nelson, New Zealand. Eidle has commenced work remotely from her home base as she was not able to travel to Pohnpei, FSM because of the travel disruptions impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Within the support staff ranks, Mr Joseph Jack was promoted in March from the VMS Operations Officer position to the vacant position of Compliance Officer after an open recruitment process. In June, Ms Virginia Ezekias was also promoted after a similar recruitment process to the VMS Operations Officer position, after serving as ROP Data Control Technician for the last seven (7) years. Mr Kilafwasru Albert was recently appointed as the second ROP Data Control Technician. With

travel disruptions, the IT Manager Mr Tim Jones and ROP Coordinator, Mr Karl Staisch are unable to travel back to Pohnpei, and are working remotely from their home bases in Hobart and Brisbane, Australia, respectively

52. The Secretariat continued to use the QuickBooks Enterprise as the Commissions financial management system. Maintenance of the headquarters building services and grounds continued to be a challenge, however, by implementing a regular maintenance schedule of the buildings and grounds as supported by regular annual budgetary allocations ensured that those properties and assets continue to be in good order.

53. The Secretariat continues to implement its green policy as it continues to look for initiatives to reduce the impacts of its operations on the environment. It encouraged the use of recycling material and discourage the use single use plastic bags and cups. The Secretariat continued to install additional solar panels and worked closely with the Pohnpei Power Authority to maximise saving from use of solar power. The Headquarters building is now closer to the goal of being a zero net energy building. The saving for 2020 from the use of solar energy is estimated at around \$80,000.

Trust Funds

54. The Commission continued in 2020 to receive voluntary contributions from member states and multilateral organisations to support the work of the Commission. These are on top of the assessed contributions of member States that supported the core budget for 2020. The following voluntary contributions were gratefully received by the Commission from:

- a. Australia - \$66,780 to the Special Requirements Fund (SRF);
- b. Canada - \$75,000 to the SRF and \$270,000 to host the annual meeting in Canada;
- c. European Union - \$198,400 for FADs acoustics analysis
- d. Japan - \$232,821 for the Japan Trust Fund to support capacity building projects in fisheries statistic, regulations and enforcement in small island developing states;
- e. Korea - \$166,952 for the Tuna Tagging Project;
- f. New Caledonia - \$9,274 as an untied donation;
- g. New Zealand - \$563,835 for the West Pacific East Asia Sustainable Tuna Management Project;
- h. Chinese Taipei - \$400,000 for the Chinese Taipei Trust Fund to support capacity building in the fisheries sector in small islands developing states; and
- i. United States of America - \$211,000 to be used for \$85,000 for Non-entangling and Biodegradable FAD Research/Trials; \$47,500 for Electronic Monitoring; \$31,000 for IT Upgrades for Virtual Meeting; and \$47,500 to the SRF for Observer Training and Livelihood.

Information Technology Systems

55. As in previous years, the Secretariat network maintained internal operations and support to member States at more than 99% systems availability. The information and communication technology systems at the Secretariat are serviced by two full time staff, one professional and one support staff. Additional support for hardware infrastructure, website development, systems analysis, and application development are sourced from four key external partners.

56. The global pandemic induced travel disruptions placed additional demands on the Secretariat's ICT infrastructure with more demand on online transactions and meetings. The network firewalls, email gateway and remote desktop infrastructure were able to meet the additional demands required to support the level of remote working. The ICT team continued to proactively support the work of the Commission with its use of video conferencing tools through trials of various platforms in low bandwidth situations and establishing a leading practice to hosting large-scale secure meetings.

57. In addition to the hardware and network infrastructure, the ICT team have been actively supporting the Compliance and Science teams with various enhancements to the online application portfolio. Most significant of these are the new VMS reporting tool, the high seas Transshipment reporting tool and the automated publishing of ACE tables.

4. SERVICES PROVIDERS TO THE COMMISSION

58. When the Commission was established in 2004, the Convention that established it acknowledged that some of the functions expected of the Commission were already undertaken by then existing regional organizations and arrangements. So, the Commission was encouraged to take advantage of those existing capacities and avoid duplicating the same capacity. The Commission continued in 2020 to maintain contractual arrangements with other regional organisations for the provision of certain services on behalf of the Commission. These arrangements are explained in the succeeding paragraphs

4.1 The Oceanic Fisheries Programme of the Pacific Community (SPC)

59. The Oceanic Fisheries Programme of the Pacific Community (SPC-OFP) as the Scientific Services Provider for the Commission continued to conduct data management, statistical analysis, stock assessments and related analytical services, management analyses and member performance monitoring, and other advisory and technical services as may be required by the Commission

60. In 2020, SPC-OFP authored and co-authored around 70 papers and reports for SC16, with additional papers to TCC16 and WCPFC17, and provided *ad hoc* advice and support throughout the year. In addition, SPC-OFP provided the necessary technical and scientific advisory support for the following activities:

- a. produced several key scientific papers and presentations for SC16, TCC16 and WCPFC17 meetings, including the SC16-agreed stock assessments for WCPO bigeye and yellowfin tuna;
- b. assisted the WPEA Project by supporting Tuna Data Review and Annual Tuna Catch Estimates Workshops virtually hosted by the Project participating countries (Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam), and ongoing database system and data management support; and
- c. continued the technical work in support of the WCPFC indicative work plan for the development of harvest strategies with funding support from New Zealand funded;
- d. conducted the Pacific Tuna Tagging Project (PTTP) and coordinated the PTTP Steering Committee Meeting virtually;
- e. continued the Biological Sampling Programme and hosted the 2nd WCPFC Tuna Tissue Bank Steering Committee Meeting virtually;
- f. hosted the virtual Tuna Data Workshop to assist compilation of tuna fishery data for developing countries;

- g. hosted the Preparatory Workshop for 2020 Stock Assessments;
- h. provided advice on the completeness of scientific data provision by CCMs, ROP data submission and available information on purse-seine and longline observer coverage, and catch and effort table summaries for tropical tuna CMMs and South Pacific albacore; and
- i. continued to provide assistance to the Secretariat so that ROP-data could be used as a source of data in the online Compliance Case File system

61. Furthermore, SPC-OFP continued to curate and facilitate access by researchers to samples contained in the WCPFC Tissue Bank and actioned various requests for access to WCPFC data, as approved by the WCPFC Executive Director.

62. SPC-OFP also responded to questions and comments on the Online Discussion Forum. Summary of the Online Discussion Forum is available at <https://www.wcpfc.int/node/47463>.

4.2 The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)

63. The Commission continued its association with the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) through its service level agreement for VMS services, and since 30 June 2016, the service provider used by FFA has been TrackWell (www.trackwell.com). The Pacific VMS system continued to operate as two separate and distinct entities to protect the integrity of the Commission VMS data and the FFA VMS data. Currently there are almost 3,800 vessels reporting to the Commission VMS, and nearly 33% report through the FFA VMS system with position transfer to the WCPFC (the Commission separately maintains VMS contracts for airtime services for positions from the WCPFC-VMS direct reporting vessels). The Commission VMS system under the services level agreement provided continued ongoing support to routine VMS services, “flick the switch” implementation and members’ high seas MCS operations.

4.3 The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC)

64. The ISC is the designated Scientific Services Provider for the Northern Committee and in that role, on request, provides scientific information and advice (including its meeting reports) to the annual meetings of the Northern Committee, Scientific Committee and the Commission.

65. The 20th Plenary Session of the ISC was virtually held from 15 to 20 July 2020. Dr John Holmes (Canada) chaired the meeting, and Member delegates from Canada, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Korea, Mexico, USA and WCPFC, and Observers from American Fisheries Research Foundation, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Pew Charitable Trusts, the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council, and World Wildlife Fund (Japan) attended.

66. The key outcomes of the ISC20 include:

- a. ISC conducted benchmark stock assessments for North Pacific Albacore and Pacific Bluefin Tuna.
 - The NP albacore stock is likely not overfished relative to the LRP of $20\%SB_{\text{current},F=0}$ and the current $F_{2015-2017}$ is likely at or below seven potential F-based reference points.

- The Pacific bluefin tuna stock is overfished relative to the potential biomass-based reference points and the recent fishing mortality is above the level producing 20%SPR.
- b. The conservation information of WCP Striped Marlin stock was updated, noting that catches must be reduced to 60% of the WCPFC catch quota from CMM 2010-01 (3,397 mt) to 1,359 mt in order to achieve a 60% probability of rebuilding to 20%SB₀ (3,610 mt) by 2022 if the short-term recruitment scenario (2012-2016) continues.
 - c. The ISC work plan for 2020-21 includes a benchmark stock assessment of blue marlin; indicator analysis of Shortfin mako shark; advancing biological sampling for NP albacore and shark species; continuing the MSE process for NP albacore; and enhancing database and website management.
 - d. The next ISC Plenary will be hosted by the USA in Kona, Hawaii, July 14-19, 2021.
67. In 2020, the ISC's contribution to the WCPFC includes:
- a. presentation of two benchmark stock assessments for NP albacore and Pacific bluefin tuna to SC16 and provided stock status and conservation information for the two stocks;
 - b. presentation of a summary on key outcomes of the ISC20 plenary meeting to NC16; and
 - c. provision of scientific information on the stock status of NP albacore and Pacific bluefin tuna to WCPFC17.

5. CONCLUSION

68. The year 2020 will certainly have its special place in the Commission's history. It seriously challenged the Commission's resilience and adaptability. The pandemic induced disruptions to international travels left the Commission with no choice but to cancel all physical meetings and instead sanction the transaction of Commission business and activities including its meetings through electronic means. With the constraints of electronic meetings, the Commission had to re-direct the scope of the work of its subsidiary bodies and that of the Secretariat in 2020 to ensure that the Commission focuses its work in 2020 on the key essential issues and decisions that the Commission must take in 2020 to guarantee the continuation of its work and functions in 2021 and onward years and to ensure there is no avoidable gap in the WCPFC conservation and management regime. In doing so, the Commission avoided the need to cancel any of its meetings in 2020 and its annual meeting for 2020. WCPFC17 is schedule to be convened electronically from 8 to 15 December 2020. This demonstrates, clearly the resilience and adaptability of the WCPFC which is attributable directly to the strong spirit of cooperation, collaboration, dedication and care of the members, cooperating non-members and participating territories and stakeholders of the WCPFC.

69. Looking ahead to 2021, it is not unlikely that the disruptions and uncertainties caused by the unprecedented global COVID-19 pandemic would continue. At the date of this report most of the Members situated within the western and central Pacific Ocean, in particular the small island developing countries, fortunately remain largely virus free and hopefully they continue to be so. Without intending to pre-empt the outcomes of WCPFC17, it would be imperative and prudent that the Commission carefully assess and consider in its forward planning the potential impacts of further similar challenges in 2021 on the work of the Commission and the capacity of the Secretariat to manage those challenges.

70. The WCPFC17 is invited to discuss and note the report.

