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FACTSHEET

2011



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Offshore Fisheries

ENSURING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF PACIFIC TUNA

Forum Fisheries Agency Convention (FFA Convention)

**FFA
MISSION:**
STRENGTHENING
NATIONAL CAPACITY
AND REGIONAL
SOLIDARITY FOR
SUSTAINABLE TUNA
FISHERIES.

The FFA Convention is the founding document of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, which was established and signed by 12 countries in 1979 in Honiara, Solomon Islands. Since its inception, this membership has increased to 17 countries: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

The objectives of the FFA Convention are:

- i. Conservation and optimum utilization of the species covered by the Convention;
- ii. Promotion of regional cooperation and coordination with respect to fisheries policies;
- iii. Securing of maximum benefits from the living resources of the region for their peoples and for the region as a whole and in particular the developing countries;
- iv. Facilitating the collection, analysis, evaluation and dissemination of relevant statistical scientific and economic information about the resources covered by the convention.

The Role of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)

The FFA consists of the governing body - the Forum Fisheries Committee (FFC), which meets annually to approve the budget and work programme, and the FFA Secretariat. The central function of the FFA is to enable member countries to manage, conserve and use the tuna resource through enhancing national capacity and strengthening regional solidarity. This can be divided to three broad tasks that must be carried out by member nations to maximize economic and social benefits.

The Role of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) continued

- i. Manage the fishery to ensure use is sustainable and will provide tuna now and in the future.
- ii. Develop the fishery to harvest, process and market tuna to create jobs, income and a thriving industry.
- iii. Monitor, control and survey the fishery to stop illegal fishing and to ensure fishing benefits are awarded to fishers who follow the rules of development and management set by governments.

The FFA advises on marine boundary delimitation, legal, technical and economic issues, monitoring and surveillance of foreign fishing activity, human resource and institutional strengthening, applied fisheries research, policy assessments and organization and representation at international fisheries meetings.

Focus of the FFA

Fisheries Management

The FFA provides policy and services to its members. This includes legal expertise, principles and projects around Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM), policy expertise and support for decision making bodies, notably WCPFC and SC-SPTBF (Sub-Committee on South Pacific Tuna and Billfish Fisheries)

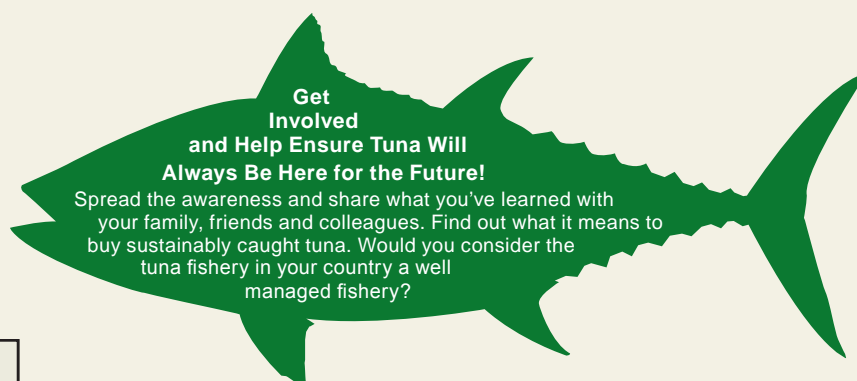
Monitoring, Control and Surveillance

The combined exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of member nations are large in relation to their land area. This places several restrictions on members in their ability to monitor, control and guard this extensive area spanning 30 million square kilometers. In an effort to help local fishers and the tuna industry in the Pacific, the FFA established the satellite-based vessel monitoring system (VMS) project, which was launched in 1999. The vessel monitoring system (VMS) uses an automatic location communicator (ALC), about the size of a car radio. It is a requirement that the ALC must be operational at all times while the vessel is in the Convention Area. It transmits information about a vessel's position, speed and course to an FFA member monitoring station. This innovation guarantees compliance by foreign fishing vessels, ultimately protects the livelihoods of local small-scale tuna fishermen and promotes sustainable tuna management in the Convention Area.

Source: Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, FFA (2011)

FFA has been instrumental in the following achievements:

- Nauru Agreement (1982)
- Regional Register of Foreign Fishing Vessels (1984)
- US Multilateral Treaty on Fisheries (1987, 2003)
- Niue Treaty (1992)
- Palau Arrangement (1993, 1997 & 2003)
- FSM Arrangement (1994)
- FFA Vessel Monitoring System; and
- WCPFC Convention (2004)



For more information

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Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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