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**Consideration of topics
for Issue Specific National Reports (ISNRs)**

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Consideration of topics for Issue Specific National Reports (ISNRs)

Introduction

1. The purpose of this paper is to seek guidance from Heads of Fisheries (HoF) on the issues that they would like to have addressed in the form of Issue Specific National Reports (ISNRs). We also propose an approach to prioritize among potential topics. Further, based on issues that have been raised with OFP in various forums by members, we have also included an initial set of potential ideas for ISNR topics, but we strongly encourage members to submit other ideas of interest to them.
2. Due to delays in important project funding we will not be able to provide as much resources to ISNRs in 2011 as we anticipated -- National Tuna Fisheries Status Reports must remain our top priority, nevertheless we would like to begin work in this area in 2011 and look forward to direction from HoF on which issues to address first.
3. At Head of Fisheries in 2009 OFP outlined a proposal to change the way in which we delivered advice to our members. The main goals of the proposed changes were to increase the frequency of country-specific advice papers and increase our ability to respond to ad-hoc requests. Issue Specific National Reports (ISNRs) were a key part of this new model, which was endorsed by members at the mini-HoF held in Honiara in May 2010:
4. ***ISSUE-SPECIFIC NATIONAL REPORT (ISNR) PRIORITISATION*** – *The meeting agreed that a regular item will be included in the annual HOF agenda to allow discussion and prioritisation of issues to be covered in the ISNRs. This will include pre-submission of ideas by members for ISNR topics to SPC prior to the HOF, SPC compiling and circulating those ideas for consideration by members, and subsequent discussion and prioritisation of topics to be covered via the ISNRs over the next 12 months.*
5. The explicit purpose of the ISNR papers is to allow OFP to identify national level fisheries management issues (requiring scientific inputs) which are common across multiple member countries and territories and to simultaneously deliver advice on those issues to the relevant members in a timely manner. OFP can provide advice on issues which are unique to individual countries via other mechanisms (NTFSRs and ad-hoc advice).

Process for selection of ISNRs

6. The initial proposal for the process to select the topics for ISNRs is as follows:
 - Step 1: In advance of the annual HoF meeting, SPC circulates to HoF potential topics (based on common requests and/or discussions held with countries over the previous 12 months) and seeks views on these and suggestions by members for other topics to be added to the list.
 - Step 2: SPC compiles all the ideas and puts together a table which summarizes the different potential topics.

Step 3: At the annual HoF, countries rank the 3 topics which are of greatest importance to them

Step 4: SPC starts work on the high importance topics (the number will depend on resources and the amount of work required for each issue).

7. In this process it will be important that this service is shared across our entire membership, so further prioritization may be required in the future.

Proposed approach for 2011

8. To test this concept SPC has selected one issue already based on the requests received from several of our members. These reports will be completed in the first half of 2011. This set of reports will address **factors affecting longline albacore CPUE** in seven SPC member EEZs (New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa, American Samoa, Cook Islands, and French Polynesia have been selected based on data availability). Key questions to be addressed include:
- a. What has more impact on CPUE – oceanographic conditions or overall stock abundance?
 - b. Does the Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) adequately describe the oceanographic impacts – and therefore provides a simple way to predict the coming season?
 - c. How much can CPUE be expected to vary at current levels of abundance?
 - d. How might CPUE change if the stock is fished down to the MSY level?
9. In addition to this ISNR we would expect HoF to provide us two other ISNRs to start work on in the latter half of 2011 and in to 2012. Depending on the nature of these reports we would expect one or both to be completed by mid-2012. SPC’s initial thoughts for potential topics, based on the types of questions we are being asked, are provided below.

Title	Description	Comments
Longline logsheet reconciliation	Use recently improved VMS coverage to help estimate logsheet reporting rates for DWFN fleets and identify data gaps	Best for those countries with DWFN longline fleets operating – typically those in the tropical tuna fishery
Assessment of shark targeting and factors influencing shark catch rates.	Use observer (and in some instances logsheet data) to identify potential shark targeting behaviours and to assess what fishing method, area related and environmental factors have the greatest influence on shark catch rates.	Most applicable to countries with observer programmes and wishing to develop NPOA for sharks, or who are interested in managing the level of interaction between sharks and fisheries operating in zone.
Estimation of localized exploitation rates from tagging data	Use release and recapture data from the recent Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme (PTTP) to estimate levels of exploitation (i.e. fishing intensity) in your EEZ	Most applicable to those with high levels of tagging, e.g. Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, and Federated States of Micronesia
Factors affecting longline catch rates of yellowfin and bigeye tuna	Determine the factors, both oceanographic and operational which result in high catch rates of BET and YFT	Best for those countries with locally based fleets and high logsheet and/or observer coverage

Factors affecting the level of purse seine effort that occurs in an EEZ in a given year	Use operational logsheet data to determine the factors, both oceanographic, climatic and operational which result in high purse seine fishing effort in any given EEZ over time	Relevant to countries with significant purse seine effort and those wishing to better understand why purse seine effort is low or sporadic in their zones
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Summary and conclusions

10. OFP is embarking on a new way to provide country-specific advice through NTFSRs and Issue Specific National Reports (ISNRs). Whilst we do not yet have the resources to fully implement this approach we still hope to begin this work in 2011. In order to begin implementing this approach Heads of Fisheries are invited to:
- Note the new approach for providing National-level advice
 - Carefully consider the proposed approach for prioritizing ISNR topics so that this can be agreed at HoF
 - Note that a prototype ISNR on albacore CPUE will be completed in the first half of 2011
 - Review the initial list of potential ISNR topics and provide feedback to SPC on this list, including other topics of interest so that two further ISNR can be selected by HoF