

# PRESS RELEASE

## CONSULTATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREEN CLIMATE FUND (GCF) TUNA PROJECT PROPOSAL

**[Sopu, Tongatapu, February 16, 2023]** – The Ministry of Fisheries held a 2 days consultation for the development of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Tuna Project Proposal with consultants from The Pacific Community (SPC) Vallerie Allain, Kara Miller from Conservation International (CI) and Filimoe'unga 'Aholelei, a national consultant. This consultation started off in the Ministry of Fisheries office on February 16 and was brought to a close in the Fa'onelua Convention Centre on February 17 with the stakeholders. The CEO for Fisheries Dr. Tuikolongahau Halafihi delivered the opening remarks and in attendance were Fisheries staff from the Fisheries Science Division and Fisheries Management & Development Division.



Climate change threatens to disrupt the traditional supply of fish for food security of the people of the Pacific Islands and the vital contributions of tuna fishing to national economies. Therefore, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) aims to help develop a funding proposal for a program to manage the impacts of climate change on communities and economies that are dependent on the fisheries sector which includes Tonga and 14 other Pacific Island countries. The major program is designed to help Pacific Island communities and economies to adapt in two main ways:

1. Increasing access to tuna to fill the gap in fish supply by:
  - a. Helping rural communities to scale-up the use of fish aggregating devices (FADs) anchored in nearshore waters to catch tuna effectively and safely.

b. Improving the supply of tuna for urban communities during transshipment of industrial tuna catches in regional ports.

2. Developing an Advanced Warning System (AWS) based on improved modelling to reduce uncertainty in the impact of ocean warming on tuna distribution.

The AWS will enable tuna-dependent Pacific Island countries to identify the effects of tuna redistribution on industrial fishing patterns with greater confidence, and negotiate effectively to retain the current economic benefits they receive from tuna regardless of the redistribution of the fish.

This consultation provided opportunities to identify priorities for strengthening the national Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) programme, assessing the potential to use bycatch from longlining operations, and using the results of the Advanced Warning System.



The outcomes of this consultation were very fruitful as the consultants were eager to address the needs of the stakeholders as they discussed the benefits which the GCF regional programme will offer in improving food security for Pacific Island communities and helping to secure important economic benefits that many of the island nations receive from tuna fishing.

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