THE SCICOFISH PROJECT

Overall objective

The Scientific Support for the Management of Coastal and Oceanic Fisheries in Pacific Islands Project (SciCOFish) is a new European Union funded regional project. Its overall objective t is the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and oceanic fisheries resources in the P-ACP region. It addresses a key aspect of the Regional Indicative Programme (RIP), namely, the development of cost-effective solutions for the sustainable management of marine and land-based resources. It directly responds to the P-ACP leaders' Vava'u Declaration and the recent 2008 Forum meeting in Niue, which called for comprehensive fisheries conservation measures, both in EEZs and on the high seas; and the sustainable and effective management of national coastal fisheries.

Duration and budget

The implementation period of the Scicofish project started from the entry into force of the contribution agreement (16/04/2010) until the 3rd of March 2014.·With a total cost of about 8.6 million Euros it has fourteen permanent staff. The project supervisor, Mike Batty, is the Director of the Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Division of SPC.

A steering committee, including representatives of the Pacific-ACP countries will meet once a year and oversee and validate the overall direction and policy of the project.

Project purpose

The SciCOFish purpose is to provide a reliable and improved scientific basis for management and decision making in oceanic and coastal fisheries. The project will provide the P-ACP countries with the means to develop efficient management measures, the skills to monitor their effectiveness, and some important tools to combat IUU fishing on the high seas. A 'demand-driven' approach to implementation will ensure that assistance is provided to those countries which are most likely to take up management advice.

Approach

Activities will strengthen scientific understanding of oceanic and coastal systems, respectively, and will facilitate addressing cross-cutting issues such as ecosystem relationships and the impacts of climate change through linking results via databases.

The Oceanic component, will provide scientific support for new tuna management initiatives adopted by P-ACPs at a critical time for conservation of the stocks. In particular, intensive observer training and enhancement of national fishing activity databases will allow more effective identification and deterrence of IUU fishing activities. Furthermore, the proposed modelling studies respond to calls by P-ACP countries to develop tools and strategies to evaluate national impacts from management measures and mitigate the effects of climate change.

The Coastal component, monitoring and management of coastal fisheries, will be focused, by means of initial stakeholder consultations, on projects combining an urgent resource management issue with a strong local capability to address the issue and maintain a long-term program.