



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Economic Analysis of High Seas Transshipment Impacts on Pacific Island Countries and Territories

Issuing Organization: Sharks Pacific

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Proposal Deadline: 30 April 2026

Anticipated Project Duration: 7 months

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1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1 Overview

Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) control exclusive economic zones (EEZs) covering approximately 30 million square kilometres of the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO), representing half of the WCPFC Convention Area and containing some of the world's last healthy tuna stocks. These waters supply approximately 60% of global tuna catch, with an estimated annual delivered value exceeding USD \$4 billion.

Despite this extraordinary natural endowment, PICTs historically capture only 13-25% of the total economic value generated by tuna harvested in their waters. A critical but under-analysed factor contributing to this value leakage is the practice of high seas transshipment, whereby industrial fishing vessels transfer their catch to refrigerated carrier vessels in international waters rather than delivering to PICT ports.

High seas transshipment enables distant water fleets to remain at sea for extended periods without calling at Pacific ports, eliminating opportunities for local crew employment, onshore provisioning, vessel servicing, and port-based economic activity that would otherwise generate income and jobs in Pacific Island communities. Furthermore, the opacity of high seas transfers creates conditions in which labour rights abuses, including debt bondage, withheld wages, unsafe working conditions, and the trafficking of crew members, occur beyond the reach of any flag State or port State inspection regime. More broadly, by bypassing the onshore infrastructure of PICTs entirely, high seas transshipment systematically redirects the economic value embedded in Pacific fish stocks, including processing employment, domestic value addition, and fiscal revenues, away from the communities and nations that hold sovereign rights over those resources, deepening dependence on distant-water fishing nation access fees while undermining the long-term economic self-determination and transparency that sustainable, land-based fisheries development could otherwise provide.

1.2 The Transshipment Challenge

High seas transshipment allows distant water fishing nations (DWFNs) to:

- Avoid port entry fees, harbour charges, and service requirements
- Bypass PICT customs, inspection, and monitoring systems
- Reduce transparency in catch reporting and species composition
- Minimize economic engagement with PICT communities and businesses
- Avoid economic burdens associated with fair labour and human rights

While transshipment at sea is legal under WCPFC Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 2009-06 (revised 2022-04) when properly reported and observed, its practice fundamentally alters the economic geography of the tuna value chain, potentially diverting hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity away from the resource-owning nations.



1.3 Research Gap

Existing economic analyses of WCPO tuna fisheries have predominantly focused on:

- Flag state perspectives and fleet profitability
- Optimal harvest levels and maximum sustainable yield
- Access fee negotiations and resource rent capture
- Processing sector competitiveness

Critically absent from the literature is a comprehensive, PICT-centred analysis that quantifies the full opportunity costs, foregone revenues, and unrealized development benefits resulting from high seas transshipment versus in-port delivery requirements.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Sharks Pacific seeks to engage a qualified fisheries economist or economic research team to conduct a comprehensive economic analysis that will:

2.1 Primary Objectives

1. **Quantify historical economic losses** to PICTs from high seas transshipment practices over the past 20 years (2005-2025)
2. **Calculate current annual opportunity costs** by comparing actual economic benefits under current transshipment regimes against counterfactual scenarios requiring in-port delivery
3. **Project future economic impacts** under different policy scenarios through 2040, including climate change considerations
4. **Disaggregate impacts** at regional, sub-regional, and individual PICT levels
5. **Identify policy pathways** for PICTs to capture greater value through reformed transshipment governance

2.2 Specific Research Questions

The analysis must address the following questions:

REVENUE DIMENSIONS:

- What direct government revenues (port fees, customs duties, service charges, inspection fees) have PICTs foregone due to high seas transshipment?
- What indirect tax revenues (corporate taxes, payroll taxes, sales taxes) have been lost from reduced economic activity?
- How do these losses vary by PICT jurisdiction based on EEZ size, geographic location, and existing port infrastructure?



ECONOMIC MULTIPLIER EFFECTS:

- What are the total economic multiplier effects from in-port transshipment activities including fuel sales, provisions, crew expenditure, vessel maintenance, cold storage, logistics, and related services?
- What employment opportunities (direct and induced) have been foregone?
- What business development opportunities for PICT enterprises have been unrealized?

INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT:

- What infrastructure investments in ports, cold storage, processing facilities, and support services have been precluded by lack of guaranteed vessel traffic?
- How has the absence of reliable transshipment activity affected development of integrated tuna value chains in PICTs?

DISTRIBUTIONAL ANALYSIS:

- How are impacts distributed among PICTs with different characteristics (large vs. small EEZs, existing port infrastructure vs. limited facilities, equatorial vs. southern locations)?
- Which PICTs have been most significantly affected by current transshipment practices?

COMPARATIVE POLICY ANALYSIS:

- What are the estimated costs to DWFN fleets of in-port versus high seas transshipment requirements?
- How do these costs compare to the economic benefits that would accrue to PICTs?
- What is the net regional economic impact of different transshipment governance scenarios?

CLIMATE CHANGE INTERACTIONS (OPTIONAL):

- How might projected climate-driven tuna stock redistribution affect the geography and economics of transshipment in the WCPO?
- What are the implications for PICT transshipment policy under different climate scenarios?

3. SCOPE OF WORK

3.1 Required Deliverables

PHASE 1: LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK (MONTH 1-2)

1. Comprehensive annotated bibliography of existing research on:

- WCPO tuna fisheries economics
- Transshipment practices and regulations
- Port economics and maritime services
- Economic impact assessment methodologies
- PICT economic development strategies

2. Detailed methodological framework document specifying:

- Data sources and collection methods
- Economic modelling approaches
- Assumptions and limitations
- Counterfactual scenario construction
- Validation procedures

3. Stakeholder consultation plan

PHASE 2: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS (MONTHS 2-4)

4. Comprehensive dataset including:

- Historical transshipment volumes by location (2005-2024)
- Catch volumes transhipped at sea vs. in-port by PICT jurisdiction
- Port fee schedules and service charges across PICTs
- Economic input-output data for relevant PICT economies
- DWFN fleet operating cost structures
- Infrastructure investment data

5. Economic modelling outputs:

- Baseline economic impact assessment (current state)
- Counterfactual scenario modelling (required in-port delivery)
- Sensitivity analyses
- Climate-adjusted projections to 2040 (optional)

PHASE 3: SYNTHESIS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS (MONTHS 4-6)

6. Comprehensive final report including:

- Executive summary (maximum 5 pages)
- Full methodology description
- Detailed findings by research question
- PICT-specific impact assessments
- Policy scenario analysis
- Recommendations for PICT governments and regional organizations
- Technical appendices

7. Policy brief (max 10 pages) suitable for:

- PICT government officials
- WCPFC delegations
- Pacific Islands Forum leaders
- Regional organizations (FFA, SPC, PIFS)

8. **Peer-reviewable journal article manuscript**
9. **Presentation materials including:**
 - Technical presentation for fisheries officials (60 minutes)
 - Executive presentation for political leaders (20 minutes)
 - Infographic summary for public communication

PHASE 4: DISSEMINATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT (MONTH 7)

10. **Minimum of three stakeholder presentations:**
 - Regional technical workshop
 - WCPFC-related presentation
 - Academic or policy conference presentation
11. **Final data repository with documentation for future research**

3.2 Geographic Coverage

The analysis must cover the WCPFC Convention Area with specific focus on:

Priority PICTs: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

Additional Territories: French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna (as data permits)

3.3 Temporal Scope

- **Historical Analysis:** 2005-2024 (20-year retrospective)
- **Current Assessment:** 2023-2024 baseline
- **Future Projections:** 2025-2040 under multiple scenarios

3.4 Methodological Requirements

Proposals must demonstrate capability to employ:

1. **Economic Impact Assessment Methods:**
 - Input-output modelling
 - Computable general equilibrium (CGE) analysis (if appropriate)
 - Cost-benefit analysis
 - Economic multiplier calculation
2. **Comparative Analysis:**
 - Counterfactual scenario development
 - Difference-in-differences approaches (if applicable)
 - Sensitivity and uncertainty analysis



3. **Spatial Economic Analysis:**

- Geographic disaggregation of impacts
- Network analysis of tuna value chains
- Climate scenario integration

4. **Stakeholder Engagement:**

- Key informant interviews with PICT officials, port authorities, fishing industry representatives
- Validation workshops with technical experts
- Peer review processes

4. PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

4.1 Lead Researcher/Team Lead Requirements

The lead researcher must demonstrate:

1. **Academic Credentials:**

- PhD in Economics, Resource Economics, Agricultural Economics, or closely related field
- Minimum 10 years professional experience in fisheries economics or natural resource economics

2. **Relevant Expertise:**

- Proven track record of published research on fisheries economics, preferably in the Pacific context
- Experience with economic impact assessment and policy analysis
- Knowledge of tuna fisheries and regional fisheries management organizations
- Understanding of Pacific Island economic and political contexts

3. **Technical Capabilities:**

- Advanced quantitative modelling skills (econometric analysis, input-output modelling)
- Experience with large datasets and spatial economic analysis
- Proficiency in relevant statistical software (Stata, R, Python, or equivalent)

4. **Communication Skills:**

- Demonstrated ability to communicate complex economic analysis to non-technical audiences
- Experience writing policy-relevant research
- Track record of engaging with government officials and policymakers

4.2 Team Composition (if applicable)

While individual consultants are welcome to apply, preference may be given to teams that include:



- Senior fisheries economist (team lead)
- Pacific Islands specialist with regional knowledge and networks
- Data analyst/quantitative modeler
- Research associate for stakeholder engagement
- Optional: Climate economist or fisheries scientist for climate scenario development

4.3 Institutional Requirements

Applicants must demonstrate:

- Institutional affiliation with recognized research organization, university, or consulting firm
- Proof of liability insurance
- Capacity to manage the proposed budget and timeline
- Experience working with Pacific Island governments or regional organizations (highly desirable)

5. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Technical Proposal (Maximum 25 pages, excluding CVs and annexes)

SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROJECT (MAXIMUM 4 PAGES)

- Demonstration of understanding of the research problem
- Discussion of significance and potential impact
- Identification of key challenges and how they will be addressed

SECTION 2: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH (MAXIMUM 12 PAGES)

- Detailed methodology for each research question
- Data sources and collection strategies
- Economic modelling approaches with justification
- Counterfactual scenario construction
- Quality assurance and validation procedures
- Discussion of limitations and how they will be mitigated

SECTION 3: WORK PLAN AND TIMELINE (MAXIMUM 4 PAGES)

- Phased implementation plan with milestones
- Detailed timeline with deliverable schedule
- Stakeholder engagement plan
- Risk mitigation strategies

SECTION 4: TEAM QUALIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT (MAXIMUM 5 PAGES)

- Team composition and roles
- Organizational structure and reporting lines
- Quality control mechanisms



- Previous relevant project experience

SECTION 5: DISSEMINATION STRATEGY (MAXIMUM 3 PAGES)

- Plan for engaging PICT governments
- Strategy for academic and policy publication
- Communication and outreach approach

ANNEXES (NOT COUNTED IN PAGE LIMIT):

- Detailed CVs of key personnel (maximum 3 pages each)
- Examples of previous relevant work
- Letters of support from partner organizations (if applicable)
- Data access agreements or MOUs (if already secured)

5.2 Financial Proposal (Separate Submission)

1. Detailed Budget including:

- Personnel costs (with daily/hourly rates and time allocation)
- Travel and subsistence (itemized for stakeholder engagement, workshops, presentations)
- Data acquisition costs
- Publication and dissemination costs
- Institutional overhead
- Contingency (maximum 10%)

2. Budget Narrative explaining and justifying major cost items

3. Payment Schedule linked to deliverables

5.3 Format Requirements

- Language: English
- Font: 12-point Times New Roman or Arial
- Spacing: 1.5 line spacing
- Margins: 2.5 cm (1 inch) on all sides
- Page numbering required
- Electronic submission in PDF format

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated using the following weighted criteria:

Criterion	Weight	Evaluation Factors
Technical Approach & Methodology	35%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soundness and rigor of proposed methods • Appropriateness of economic modelling approaches • Innovation in addressing research gaps

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility of data collection strategy • Quality assurance mechanisms
Qualifications & Experience	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead researcher credentials and publication record • Team expertise in fisheries economics • Demonstrated knowledge of Pacific context • Previous relevant project experience • Institutional capacity
Understanding & Approach	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depth of understanding of the research problem • Awareness of PICT perspectives and priorities • Recognition of political and policy context • Stakeholder engagement strategy
Work Plan & Management	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity and feasibility of timeline • Logical sequencing of activities • Risk identification and mitigation • Realistic resource allocation
Budget & Value	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-effectiveness and value for money • Budget justification and transparency • Efficient use of resources • No unallowable costs

Minimum qualifying score: 70/100

Note: Financial proposals will only be opened for technically qualified proposals scoring 70 or above.

7. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

7.1 Submission Requirements

Submit the following as separate PDF files:

1. Technical Proposal (with all required sections and annexes)
2. Financial Proposal (clearly marked "FINANCIAL PROPOSAL - DO NOT OPEN WITH TECHNICAL REVIEW")
3. Completed Proposal Submission Form (template provided on website)

7.2 Submission Method

Email submission to: brina@sharkspacific.org

Subject line: " RFP Response - PICT Transshipment Economic Analysis - [Applicant Name]"

File naming convention:



- Technical_Proposal_[ApplicantName]_[Date].pdf
- Financial_Proposal_[ApplicantName]_[Date].pdf
- Submission_Form_[ApplicantName]_[Date].pdf

7.3 Deadline

Proposals must be received by 30 April 2026 at 1700 PDT via email.

Late submissions will not be considered. Applicants will receive confirmation of receipt within 24 hours.

7.4 Questions and Clarifications

Questions regarding this RFP should be submitted via email to: bubba@sharkspacific.org

Question deadline: 17 April 2026 at 1700 PDT

Answers will be sent by email from Sharks Pacific by: 24 April 2026 at 1700

All questions and answers will be shared with all prospective applicants to ensure fairness. Direct communication with Sharks Pacific staff regarding the RFP outside the official question process is prohibited.

8. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

8.1 Contract Terms

The successful applicant will be engaged under a professional services contract with the following key terms:

- **Intellectual Property:** All research outputs, data, and materials produced under this contract will be owned by Sharks Pacific, with rights granted to the researcher for academic publication after a 3-month embargo period
- **Data Sharing:** All datasets, code, and documentation must be delivered in open, accessible formats
- **Confidentiality:** Researchers must maintain confidentiality of sensitive business or government information
- **Ethics:** Research must comply with relevant ethical standards for human subjects research

8.2 Payment Terms

Payments will be made based on deliverable milestones and receipt of invoice:

- 20% upon contract signing and acceptance of Phase 1 deliverables
- 30% upon acceptance of Phase 2 deliverables
- 30% upon acceptance of Phase 3 deliverables



- 20% upon completion of Phase 4 and final acceptance

8.3 Rights and Reservations

Sharks Pacific reserves the right to:

- Request clarifications or revisions to proposals
- Negotiate with shortlisted applicants
- Request oral presentations from shortlisted candidates
- Reject all proposals if deemed not meeting requirements
- Cancel or modify this RFP at any time prior to contract award
- Award to the proposal representing best value (not necessarily lowest cost)

8.4 Eligibility

This RFP is open to:

- Individual consultants
- Academic institutions
- Research organizations
- Consulting firms
- Consortia or partnerships (with clear lead organization identified)

9. CONTEXT AND EXPECTED USE OF RESEARCH

9.1 Policy Context

This research will inform:

- PICT negotiating positions at WCPFC regarding transshipment regulations
- National fisheries policy development within PICTs
- Pacific Islands Forum discussions on regional fisheries governance
- Forum Fisheries Agency technical advice to members
- Civil society advocacy for improved benefit capture
- Academic understanding of PICT fisheries economics

9.2 Anticipated Impact

The successful research will:

1. **Fill a critical knowledge gap** in fisheries economics literature by centring PICT perspectives on transshipment
2. **Provide evidence-based foundation** for policy reforms that could redirect hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity to resource-owning nations



3. **Support PICT sovereignty** by quantifying economic impacts of governance decisions affecting their sovereign resources
4. **Inform regional cooperation** by identifying opportunities for collective action on transshipment governance
5. **Advance climate adaptation planning** by projecting how shifting tuna stocks will affect transshipment economics

9.3 Alignment with Regional Priorities

This research directly supports:

- **Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' commitments** to maximizing economic benefits from tuna resources
- **Forum Fisheries Agency's mandate** to promote sustainable use and maximum economic benefits
- **2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent** objectives on ocean resources
- **WCPFC objective** to ensure optimum utilization benefits fish stock coastal states
- **Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries** goals for increased value capture

10. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

10.1 About Sharks Pacific

Sharks Pacific is an independent research and advocacy nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing Pacific Islands sovereignty over marine resources and ensuring that the benefits from the region's valuable tuna fisheries flow equitably to the people and nations who own them. Founded on the principle that Pacific Islands Countries and Territories should be the primary beneficiaries of resources within their vast exclusive economic zones, Sharks Pacific conducts rigorous, evidence-based research that centres PICT perspectives in regional fisheries governance debates. Our work challenges the historical imbalance whereby distant water fishing nations and multinational corporations have captured the majority of economic value from Pacific tuna stocks, while the resource-owning nations receive only a fraction of the benefits generated from their natural capital.

Our mission is to understand the importance of sharks in Pacific communities, and to advocate for the conservation and responsible management of sharks and the related marine environment through research, outreach and advocacy. The goal of our approach in this project is threefold: first, to produce independent, high-quality economic and policy analysis that fills critical knowledge gaps and provides PICTs with the evidence needed to negotiate from positions of strength; second, to amplify Pacific Islands voices in regional and international fisheries forums, ensuring that PICT priorities shape conservation and management decisions affecting their resources; and third, to support capacity development within Pacific Islands governments and civil society organizations to exercise effective stewardship over their marine estates.



10.2 Contact Information

Primary Contact:

Bubba Cook
Policy Director
Sharks Pacific
bubba@sharkspacific.org
+64 (0)27 833 0537

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Key Data Sources and Information Requirements

The following data sources are anticipated to be relevant (non-exhaustive):

Publicly Available Sources:

- WCPFC Statistical datasets (catch, effort, transshipment reports)
- FFA economic indicators reports
- SPC stock assessments and oceanographic projections
- National fisheries authority annual reports
- Regional trade and economic statistics

Restricted/Permission Required Sources:

- Detailed transshipment declaration data (via FFA/WCPFC)
- VMS and catch documentation data (via national authorities)
- Port authority revenue records (via national consultations)
- Proprietary industry data (via confidential agreements)

Note: Applicants should indicate in their proposals which restricted data sources they have existing access to or relationships with relevant authorities. Sharks Pacific may be able to facilitate certain data access requests but cannot guarantee access to all desired datasets.

Appendix B: Illustrative Economic Impact Categories

The following categories illustrate (but do not limit) the scope of economic impacts to be analysed:

Direct Government Revenues:

- Port entry and departure fees
- Wharfage and berthage charges
- Customs inspection fees
- Health and quarantine charges
- Immigration processing fees



- Transshipment monitoring fees
- License and permit fees

Business Services Revenue:

- Fuel and lubricants sales
- Provisions and supplies
- Cold storage and ice
- Ship chandlery services
- Vessel maintenance and repair
- Stevedoring and loading services
- Transport and logistics
- Waste disposal

Economic Multiplier Effects:

- Crew expenditure in local economy (accommodation, food, entertainment, retail)
- Induced employment in service sectors
- Secondary business development
- Tax revenues from business activity

Foregone Infrastructure Development:

- **Crew expenditure in local** Port facility investment
- Cold storage expansion
- Processing plant development
- Maritime service sector development
- Supporting infrastructure (power, water, transport)

Employment Impacts:

- Direct employment (port workers, service providers)
- Induced employment (hospitality, retail, transport)
- Skills development and training
- Women's economic participation

Strategic Value:

- Enhanced monitoring and surveillance presence
- Improved catch documentation and traceability
- Greater bargaining power in access negotiations
- Leverage for value chain integration



Appendix C: Reference Policy Documents

Applicants are encouraged to review the following key policy documents:

1. WCPFC Conservation and Management Measure 2009-06 (and subsequent revisions) on Regulation of Transshipment
2. Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Communiqués (2015-2024) - fisheries sections
3. Forum Fisheries Agency "Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries" (2015)
4. Parties to the Nauru Agreement "PNA Strategy 2021-2025"
5. Pacific Islands Forum "2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent"
6. WCPFC "Conservation and Management Measure 2024-01" on Tropical Tunas

12. SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Before submitting your proposal, please confirm:

- Technical proposal does not exceed the page limit (excluding CVs and annexes)
- All required sections are included and clearly labelled
- CVs are limited to 3 pages per key personnel
- Financial proposal is submitted as separate PDF
- Proposal submission form is completed
- All files follow naming conventions
- Email subject line is correctly formatted
- Submission is sent before deadline with time zone confirmed
- You have received confirmation of receipt

We look forward to receiving innovative and rigorous proposals that will advance Pacific Islands Countries' and Territories' ability to capture fair value from their tuna resources.

Sharks Pacific is committed to transparency, fairness, and advancing Pacific sovereignty over marine resources. This RFP process will be conducted with integrity and all applicants will be treated equitably.

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