

Fish Fund Project Grant Application Form – Category 1

Project Information	
1. Project Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the title of the project.
<p>World Trade Organization Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies 'Need Assessment Study on the Kingdom of Tonga's Readiness to implement the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies'</p>	
2. Project Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a brief description of the project.
<p>The aim of this project is to undertake a comprehensive needs assessment to evaluate the legal, technical and institutional readiness of Tonga to implement the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (AFS) (hereinafter referred to as <i>the Agreement</i>) which was formally Accepted by the Kingdom of Tonga on the 15 September 2025.</p> <p>The proposed assessment will review the existing legal and policy frameworks governing fisheries management and subsidy administration in order to identify gaps and areas requiring amendment or development to ensure full compliance with the provisions of the Agreement. The assessment will also determine the technical and financial support needs necessary to align Tonga's fisheries management systems with the discipline and obligations of the Agreement.</p> <p>Furthermore, the assessment will examine institutional and human resource capacity constraints within the relevant government ministries and agencies involved in fisheries governance and subsidy oversight. Identifying these constraints will be essential to designing targeted capacity building interventions and ensuring effective implementation of the Agreement.</p> <p>The findings and recommendations of the assessment will inform Tonga's national implementation plan for the Agreement and guide future technical assistance, policy reform and capacity building initiatives to be undertaken in partnership with the development partners and relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>The assessment will be carried out over a period of 40-working-day period by a national consultant, under the coordination of the Ministry of Fisheries (MOF) in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development (MTED) and other government line Ministries. The detail objectives and workplan of the projects are provided in the Sections below.</p>	
3. Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly state what the project aims to accomplish.

The key objectives of the project are to:

1. Evaluate Tonga's existing legal frameworks and policy related to fisheries management, trade and subsidies, data management systems and the institutional arrangements in relations to the obligations and discipline of the AFS.
2. To strengthen Tonga's legal and policy environment by identifying and prioritizing the necessary legislative amendments, policy reforms and technical measures required for effective implementation of the Agreement.
3. To enhance the understanding of current fisheries subsidy program through comprehensive mapping and analysis, ensuring their consistency with the provisions of the AFS and identifying areas requiring adjustment or reform.
4. Develop a practical roadmap including tailored policy recommendations and implementation strategies to guide Tonga's compliance and effective participation under the Agreement.
5. Improve inter-agency coordination and institutional capacity among related government line ministries and ministry responsible for fisheries governance and subsidy administration to support long-term coherence and sustainable management of fisheries resources.

4. Context

- *Provide a summary of the context of the project and how its specific objectives in relation to implementation of the discipline(s) of the AFS.*

The WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies was adopted at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference in June 2022. The Agreement established new binding disciplines to eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, the exploitation of an overfished stocks and unregulated fishing in the high sea. The Kingdom of Tonga recently Accepted the Agreement in September 2025.

Implementing this Agreement present an important opportunity for Tonga to ensure that fisheries subsidies program does not contribute to IUU fishing and unregulated fishing at the high seas and the exploitation of overfished stock.

Tonga is a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) and heavily rely on fisheries for food security, livelihoods, employment and export earnings. The fisheries sector is managed under national legislation, regional frameworks and international multilateral Treaty to which Tonga is a party. Following Tonga's accepts the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies in September 2025, preparations are underway for its implementation once the Agreement enters into force.

Despite the priority given to implementing the Agreement, Tonga faces institutional and technical challenges, including gaps in subsidy reporting, monitoring of fishing activities, and alignment with WTO notification obligations.

To address these challenges, a Need Assessment Study is proposed to evaluate Tonga's readiness to implement the WTO Agreement on Fisheries subsidies. This study will identify legal, technical and institutional gaps, assess capacity needs, provide a comprehensive understanding of Tonga's preparedness to meet the Agreement's obligations, and propose actionable measures to strengthen compliance and promote sustainable fisheries management.

5. Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly state the results envisioned once the project is completed.
<p>The following results are what is envisioned to be completed at the end of the projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Need Assessment Report - A comprehensive final Needs Assessment Report including Tonga's readiness to implement the AFS, including legal, institutional and technical gap analysis. Update on Existing fisheries subsidies - A detailed mapping and analysis of existing fisheries subsidy in Tonga. Recommendations for priority needs - A prioritized list of needs and recommendations for technical assistance, policy reforms and capacity development to support AFS implementation. Roadmap and Implementation Plan - A proposed roadmap and implementation plan outlining key actions, timelines and responsibilities for Tonga's compliance with the AFS disciplines. Mechanism for stakeholder coordination - Developed a mechanism that will strengthen inter-ministerial coordination for fisheries subsidy governance. 	
Implementing entities	
6. Implementing Entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name of the organization(s) responsible for implementing the project.
<p>Ministry of Fisheries (MoF) in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development (MTED). Supported by Ministry of Custom and Revenue and Ministry of Finance.</p>	
7. Contact Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the full name, email address, and contact information of the focal point responsible for the project.
<p>Dr. Sione Vailala Matoto Chief Executive Officer Ministry of Fisheries Nuku'alofa Tonga. Email: ceo@tongafish.gov.to Phone: (676)7401201</p>	
8. Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe envisaged partnerships and collaborations with organizations supporting the implementation of this grant or broader programs encompassing the project, and how those will contribute to achieving the objectives of the project.
<p>The project will be implemented in collaboration with key national and regional stakeholders including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Trade and Economic Development – Technical input on WTO AFS and other WTO related policy. Ministry of Fisheries – Technical input on fisheries policy and existing fisheries subsidy program, data systems and fisheries management and operations. Ministry of Finance – Coordination of financial policy and subsidy reporting mechanisms. 	

- **Ministry of Custom and Revenue** – Technical input on national subsidy programs and subsidy reporting.
- **Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and Western Central Pacific Commission (WCPFC)** – Technical and policy guidance related to regional fisheries management and alignment with AFS obligations.
- **World Trade Organization (WTO) Secretariat / Fish Fund:** Financial and technical support under the AFS implementation assistance framework.

These strategic partnerships will ensure the study is comprehensive, policy relevant and aligned with national priorities, regional initiatives and international legal frameworks governing fisheries management. The collaboration will involve government ministries such as the Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Trade and Economic Development, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Custom and Revenue.

In addition, the engagement with Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) such as the Western and Central Pacific Commission (WCPFC), FFA and SPC will provide valuable technical expertise and regional coordination essential for managing shared fishery and addressing challenges like IUU fishing.

These partnerships will facilitate the exchange of technical knowledge, ensure the accuracy and relevance of data collected and support the development of actionable recommendations that are tailored to Tonga’s national context while fulfilling its obligations under regional and international fisheries agreements.

These collaborations is vital to achieve the study’s key objectives and laying a strong foundation for effective implementation of the Agreement.

Budget Information

9. Total Amount of the Project Grant

- *Indicate the total sum of the project grant being requested from the Fish Fund.*

Budget and Resource Allocation

Estimated Total Budget: USD 47,300

Budget Line	Description	Estimated Cost (USD)
1. Personnel & Consultancy	Lead Local/ Consultant – 40 working days × USD 650/day	26,000
2. Stakeholder Consultations	Venue hire, refreshments, materials, facilitation for inception and validation workshops	5,000
3. Data Collection & Analysis Tools	Printing, data processing, communication, software, and supplies	3,000
4. Technical Backstopping	Advisory input from regional partners (FFA/SPC/WCPFC) – remote technical support	5,000
5. Reporting & Dissemination	Editing, translation, layout, printing, and communication activities	4,000

6. Contingency (approx. 10%)	To cover unforeseen costs or adjustments	4,300
Total Estimated Budget		USD 47,300

Key Elements of Implementation

10. Monitoring & Evaluation

- Provide a description of the Monitoring & Evaluation arrangements for the project in line with the log frame and reporting provided by the Fish Fund.

Monitoring and evaluation of the projects will be coordinated by the Ministry of Fisheries in accordance with Fish Fund Logical Frameworks and reporting guidelines.

Upon approval of the funding support, the Ministry of Fisheries will develop a comprehensive M&E Framework to assess progress and performance.

Firstly, the Ministry of Fisheries will develop indicators, targets and means of verification for each of the five objectives of the study.

A summary of the M & E arrangement for each objective is provided below.

Project objectives and Monitoring & Evaluation of Indicators

1. Objective 1: Assessment and Evaluation Completion

- Indicator: Completion and submission of the final Needs Assessment Report.
- Target: Final report delivered within the agreed timeline.
- Verification: Submission receipt and stakeholder validation workshop [minutes](#).

2. Objective 2: Fisheries Subsidy Mapping

- Indicator: Number of fisheries subsidy programs mapped and analyzed.
- Target: 100% of existing subsidy program identified and documented.
- Verification: Subsidy mapping report and official government data sources.

3. Objective 3: Priority Needs Identification

- Indicator: Prioritized list of legal, technical, and capacity development needs developed and endorsed.
- Target: Endorsement by at least 3 relevant government ministries.
- Verification: Signed recommendations report and consultation meeting records.

4. Objective 4: Roadmap and implementation Plan.

- Indicator: Roadmap and implementation plan formally approved by key stakeholders.
- Target: Approval obtained within one month of report submission.
- Verification: Endorsement letters and official approval documents.

5. Objective 5: Coordination Mechanism Strengthening

- Indicator: Coordination mechanism developed and formalized; number of coordination meetings held.
- Target: Coordination mechanism established; at least 2 inter-ministerial meetings held within six months post-study.

- Verification: Coordination framework document and meeting attendance records.

In addition, the Ministry of Fisheries will ensure timely submission of the following reports by the consultant:

- Progress Monitoring: Ministry of Fisheries will track implementation milestones (inception report, draft report, stakeholder validation, final report).
- Reporting: A mid-term progress report and a final report will be submitted to the Ministry of Fisheries and then to Fish Fund Secretariat.
- Outcome Evaluation: Post-project review will assess how the study's findings inform subsequent capacity-building or policy reform activities or other activity to support Tonga in the on going implementation of the Agreement.

11. Communication & Outreach

- *Describe how your organization will communicate about the project and the support provided by the Fish Fund; describe how the results of the project will be made available and disseminated.*

The Ministry of Fisheries and will ensure transparent communication of support provided by the Fish Fund to this project through the following:

- *Public acknowledgment of Fish Fund support in all project materials, reports, and communications* – All project outputs and communication materials will clearly recognize the support provided by the Fish Fund. This will demonstrate transparency and appreciation for the Fund's contribution.
- *A stakeholder validation workshop will be held to share key findings and recommendations:* A validation workshop will be organized to present the main results and recommendations of the project to government agencies, industry stakeholders, community groups, and regional partners. The session will allow participants to provide feedback, confirm key findings, and ensure that the final outcomes reflect shared priorities.
- *Dissemination of the final report through official government channels, MTED and MoF websites, and regional partners such as FFA, WCPFC and WTO:*
The final report will be made publicly available through the official websites of the Ministry of Fisheries and the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development (MTED), including the FFA, WCPFC and the World Trade Organization (WTO), to encourage wider access and collaboration.